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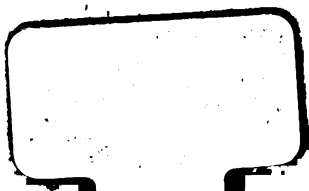


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Charlotte Anne Geyer



A
GOSSIP'S STORY,
AND
A LEGENDARY TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
ADVANTAGES OF EDUCATION.

“ Nor Peace nor Ease the Heart can know,
“ Which, like the Needle true,
“ Turns at the touch of Joy and Woe,
“ Yet, turning, trembles too.”

GREVILLE'S ODE TO INDIFFERENCE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THE THIRD EDITION.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR T. N. LONGMAN, PATER-NOSTER-ROW.

1798.



THE following pages intended, under the disguise of an artless History, to illustrate the Advantages of CONSISTENCY, FORTITUDE, and the DOMESTIC VIRTUES; and to expose to ridicule, CAPRICE, AFFECTED SENSIBILITY, and an IDLE CENSORIOUS HUMOUR; are most respectfully inscribed to

THE HON. MRS. COCKAYNE;

by one who has been long honoured by her friendship, who sincerely admires the maternal and conjugal duties exemplified in her conduct; and who wishes, by her example, to recommend them to others.



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INTRODUCTION.

MRS. Prudentia Homespun is infinitely obliged to the World, for the favourable reception it gave to her tale of Maria Williams, or the Advantages of Education ; which more than answered her highest expectations.

The World in reply thanks Mrs. Prudentia for her politeness ; but assures her, it never heard either of her or her Maria.

Mrs. Prudentia in her rejoinder observes, that she must define what those expectations were. She was not romantic enough to imagine, that a little novel issuing from a general repository, unsupported by puff, unpatronised by friends, and even unacknowledged by its author, could rise into celebrity. There were besides some intrinsic reasons why it should not succeed, according to the

common acceptation of that word. It had no splendour of language, no local description, nothing of the marvellous, or the enigmatical, no sudden elevation, and no astonishing depression. It merely spoke of human life as it is, and so simple was the story, that at the outset an attentive reader must have forboded the catastrophe. Indeed it required some attention from the reader, which in works of this kind is also a fault: for not ambitious of dazzling the imagination, and of enflaming the passions, it uniformly pursued its aim of meliorating the temper and the affections.

No pecuniary advantages, nor the applause of the million could be expected from a work like this. As to the former, Mrs. Prudentia is happily too *rich* to wish for any. Lest the word rich should create the idea of a Nabob's fortune, she explains by saying, that she possesses a clear annuity of one hundred pounds per annum, and that she calls herself very wealthy, because it is adequate to all her wishes.

The

The *general* approbation would not have been sufficient; for the generality of readers do not judge by the rules by which she wishes to be tried. The limited circulation of Maria Williams has afforded her the gratification she desired. She has heard, without fearing any implied flattery, the merit of the work asserted by those, who wondered who could be the author. Many ladies who, by conscientiously discharging the duties of the maternal character, may be presumed to be judges of what is best adapted for the perusal of youth, have commended it, as a work from which much real instruction may be derived. The author's highest expectations presumed upon no further applause.

She has resumed the pen with a similar intention. Happy, if while she is instructing her sex how to avoid yielding to imaginary sorrows, she can, for a moment, banish from her dejected heart, the pressure of *real* calamity, to which it is her duty to submit; or forget the friend whose approbation was the incentive and reward of her *former* labours.

Some

Some further apology may be judged necessary for introducing a Legendary Tale but slightly connected with the principal story. Were this work to be tried by the rules of an epick, the author is sensible that the episode is considerably too long; but she hopes a trifle will not be measured upon the bed of Procrustes. The example of the inimitable Goldsmith, and many later writers, who have successfully interspersed poetry with prose in works of this nature, excited a wish to gratify the publick taste by similar variety. And as moral improvement is the avowed end, descriptive poetry was not thought so *impressive* as a connected tale, which insensibly ran on to a greater length than was at first designed.

▲

GOSSIP'S STORY,

- A N D -

A LEGENDARY TALE.

CHAPTER I.

The comforts of Retirement—Rural Elegance defined by example.

AS I profess myself an egotist, it will not be uncharacteristick to begin with stating the qualifications I possess, to execute with propriety the task I have undertaken.

I have been for several years the inhabitant of a small market-town called Danbury, in the north of England. As my annuity is regularly paid, and my family consists of only myself, a female servant, and an old tabby-cat, I have but little domestick care to engage my attention and anxiety. Now, as I am of a very active temper, my mind naturally steps abroad, and occupies itself in the concerns of my neighbours. Besides the peculiar advantages of my situation, I enjoy some inhe-

inherent qualities, which I flatter myself render me a very excellent gossip. I have a retentive memory, a quick imagination, strong curiosity, and keen perception. These faculties enable me not only to retain what I hear, but to connect the day dreams of my own mind; to draw conclusions from small premises; in short, to tell what other people think, as well as what they do. Other circumstances also conspire to render my pretensions to the above character indisputable.

As Danbury possesses the advantages of an healthy situation, dry soil, and pleasant environs, it has long been distinguished for the genteel connections which it affords. Many single ladies, like myself, have chosen it for their residence, and we have established a very agreeable society, which meets three times a week, to communicate the observations which the levity of youth, the vanity of ostentation, or the meanness of avarice have suggested. Our
remarks

remarks have all the acumen which experience and penetration can supply, and as we exhibit models of prudence in our own conduct, it is a rule with us to shew no mercy to others.

I will not attempt to conceal the censures which the objects of our animadversion, in return, affect to throw upon us. I am not ignorant that we are termed the *scandalous* club, and that spleen, malevolence, and disappointment are said to be the idols, on whose altars we sacrifice every reputation which comes within our reach. Perfection belongs to no human institution, and I will own that sometimes we *may* be wrong. The reader must know that I am uncommonly good humoured and tender hearted ; whether therefore my dissent from my lady associates proceeds altogether from a redundance of "the milk of human kindness" in my disposition, or from too great severity in theirs, time must determine.

Amongst the agreeable appendages to Danbury, its vicinity to Stannadine must be enumerated.

merated. This elegant mansion was built by a respectable gentleman, whose family falling into decay, it has since become the casual residence of several genteel people; and has thus been instrumental in promoting our amusements, not only by its pleasing embellishments and delightful walks, but by the quick succession of its inhabitants, who supply a never-failing source of observation and anecdote. I am not going to detail the commodious apartments in the house, or to describe the grounds, beautiful as they are by nature, and highly cultivated by art. A mere novice in landscape designation, I confine myself to the delineation of the lights and shades of human character; and as I conceive the history of the Dudley family may afford instruction as well as amusement to the younger part of the female world, I shall dedicate my present history to their concerns, hinting at the same time, that it is not absolutely impossible, but that I may at some future period again treat the publick with some other delicacy, drawn from the ample stores I possess.

No

No sooner was the arrival of Mr. Dudley and his daughter at Stannadine announced, than our society immediately met, to determine on the propriety of visiting the strangers. This is a preliminary etiquette we have resolved never to omit in future, since by a neglect of circumspection, we had been betrayed into an intimacy with the last inhabitants of the mansion, whom we unfortunately discovered had amassed a fortune by keeping a sloop-shop in Wapping. The universal contempt with which we treated them when we knew their mean origin, had indeed been the cause of driving them from the neighbourhood; but as we were all gentlewomen born, we could not easily overcome the secret mortification we had experienced.

We resolved therefore upon the present occasion to be very circumspect, and examined in full council all the intelligence which our respective Mollies and Betties had been able to procure from Mr. Dudley's servants, who had arrived about a fortnight before

6 A GOSSIP'S STORY.

fore to prepare for his reception. Little, I am sorry to say, could be discovered. He was just come from the West-Indies, and had hired most of his household in London, it was however guessed that he was rich, and his establishment was upon an expensive plan.

It was at length determined that we should depute two ladies of our body, in the character of inspectors, to inform us whether the Dudleys were *visitable* beings or not. Mrs. Medium the Vicar's lady, and Miss Cardamum the daughter of an eminent medical gentleman, were selected for the important trust. Their abilities were indisputable; as Mrs. Medium had been for many years an humble friend to a lady of quality, and Miss Cardamum constantly accompanied her papa every summer to Scarborough, it was impossible they could be imposed upon in the grand articles of fashionable appearance and intrinsic gentility.

It being necessary, not only to form a right notion of the Dudleys, but also to impress

press them with a high idea of *us*, we determined, though the walk was but half a mile, and the morning inviting, that Mr. Cardamum's carriage should be got ready for the occasion, and the foot-boy had orders to tie on his visiting queue, brush his livery, and trim up old Bolus the favourite chair-horse. The reins also were blacked for the occasion, and all the ornaments of the buggy (I mean the capriole) furnished to the brightness of silver. Miss Cardamum, dressed in an elegant new riding habit, was driver; and Mrs. Medium, in honour of the embassy, was attired in the rich brocade Lady Seraphina gave her on her nuptials, and to take off from the antiquity of its appearance, she put on a modern hat with three upright feathers. They stopped at my door, and kindly promised to give me the first intelligence of their return. The fair Belle gave the lash a smart twirl, and Bolus set off on a good round trot. Little Joe on Mr. Cardamum's poney, with his stick held perpendicular, (as

was

was the fashion amongst the lacquies at Scarborough last season,) followed the carriage as fast as possible.

The result of the visit was communicated in the afternoon, but unhappily the ladies did not agree in their verdict. Miss Cardamum would not assent to Mrs. Medium's determination, that Miss Dudley was handsome and well dressed; and the fair spinster's opinion concerning the elegance of the furniture, and the excellence of the cakes and chocolate, was as warmly disputed by the experienced matron. The points in which they agreed did not tend to inspire us with any very high idea of the strangers. They determined Miss Dudley to be a *shy fearful thing*; Mr. Dudley, on the contrary, had a most intimidating look, which seemed to criticise every word, and to remark every action. A little incident was cited to confirm this observation. Over the chimney was the portrait of a lady, which, when Mrs. Medium admired, and observed how much it put her in mind
of

of one in Lady Seraphina's saloon, Miss Dudley said with a sigh in a low voice, as if to prevent further inquiry, that it was intended for her mother. She then stole a timid confused glance at her father, who withdrew to the window evidently discomposed. The conclusion which my friends drew from this was, that he had been a severe husband, and that his daughter would, if she durst, have reproached him for his unkindness. I ventured to hint that the fact admitted a contrary inference, but I was pressed so strongly with arguments drawn from Mr. Dudley's stern manner, and from the restraint which the poor girl visibly suffered, that I was forced to give up my opinion.

After much discussion it was at last agreed, that though they promised to add but little to the pleasures of Danbury, yet as they certainly were gentlefolks, lived in style, and intended coming to our assembly, we might as well visit them. And we visited them accordingly.

CHAP. II.

*The Author shews that she studies climax,
or gradation of Character.*

AS it is the duty of all authors to relieve their reader's curiosity as soon as is consistent with their plans, I shall dedicate this chapter to introductory anecdotes of the Dudley family, after having made a few preliminary observations.

The spirit of penetration or the ability to discover people's characters by a cursory glance, though arrogated by almost every body, is in reality possessed by very few. Nothing can be more intricate than the human heart, and the discriminating shades which serve to mark variation of character, are generally too minute and confused to write distinct traits upon the countenance. Even words and actions are often deceitful guides. People frequently step out of themselves. The man of sense has his weak moments, the
woman

woman of reflection on some occasions acts inconsiderately. Now though such deviations furnish very agreeable amusement to the censorious, the idle, and the malevolent ; none but the thoughtless part of mankind will see these incidental defects in any other light than as a casual departure from the real character.

I confess it is my wish to hunt this said spirit of penetration out of the world, as I am convinced it is productive of many serious evils. It often teaches us to think highly of the unworthy, and meanly of the meritorious. It makes us arrogant and self opinionated, or else exposes us to many difficulties in endeavouring to rectify the erroneous notions we have adopted. It assists the artifices of falsehood, increases the allurements of seduction, feathers the shafts of flattery, and casts an additional veil over the disguises of hypocrisy. It is one of the errors into which inexperience is most apt to fall, springing from the ingenuous confidence, sanguine passions, and prompt decision incident to

young minds. Happy are they if they become less precipitate in their judgments, before the consequences of their errors are fatal to their peace!

Neither Mrs. Medium nor Miss Cardamum had the apology of youth or inexperience to plead in excuse for the erroneous conclusions they had drawn. The ladies were arrived at years of maturity, and had been in the course of their lives at least one thousand times mistaken. But there are people who never will derive advantages from the past, who are happy in the art of self-excuse, and determined to think themselves always right, who place their own portion of human infirmity to their neighbour's account; and certainly, as they have so little to do in reforming errors at home, may be allowed to look abroad for employment.

To those who prefer skimming over the superficies to diving into the substance, strong features marked with masculine sense may wear the aspect of ill-humour, and severity; diffidence will appear like folly; and the

the reserve of polite prudence may be denominated pride. All common observers, though they love the utmost minuteness in a story, are fond of discussing abstract qualities in a compendious manner; and I have known "Oh, Madam, it was so foolish," or "She is so ill-natured," or "Was not that extravagant," or "He is so proud," decidedly sink a character into supreme contempt, even in the short period while the speaker was dealing a hand at quadrille. Indeed, exclusive of errors in point of dress or omissions of ceremonious forms, pride, ill-humour, folly, and extravagance seem to include all human vices; at least in the vocabulary of Danbury. One reason for this may be that pride and ill-humour wound our feelings, while the folly and extravagance of our neighbours are implied compliments to our own good sense and discretion.

To return to the Dudleys—

Mr. Dudley possessed in an eminent degree the virtues of the head and the heart. Blessed with the early advantage of a liberal

education, he united the character of the true Gentleman to the no less respectable name of the generous conscientious merchant. Having passed through many vicissitudes of life, he had learned how to form a temperate judgment, and by truly appreciating its pleasures and its pains, he knew how to reduce his desires to that moderate standard, which is most likely to produce content.

In the death of an amiable wife he had experienced a severer blow than all the former shocks of fortune could inflict. Two daughters were the offspring of an union, which, while it lasted, produced as much happiness as any sublunary connection could afford. Mrs. Alderson, the mother of Mrs. Dudley, took the youngest child immediately upon her daughter's death, with a declared intention of adopting her for her own, and making her heiress to all her fortune. Louisa, the elder, accompanied her father to Barbadoes, where he had a considerable estate, for the improvement of which he judged his presence absolutely necessary.

A mind

A mind like Mr. Dudley's, awakened to all the impressions of duty both to his Maker and his fellow-creatures, must be supposed to have possessed sufficient strength to overcome the extreme indulgence of hopeless grief. Though he found it impossible to forget that he was once most happy, he acquiesced with patient resignation in the limited enjoyments which his situation allowed, and stifling in his breast the feelings of widowed love, endeavoured to supply its place with the anxious tenderness of the paternal character. Louisa, who from her earliest years discovered a disposition to improve both in moral and mental excellence, listened with attention to her father's precepts, illustrated at times by the painful yet pleasing description of what her mother was. Instructions thus enforced by example, sunk with double weight into her retentive mind; and she early nursed the laudable ambition of copying those amiable virtues, of which her departed mother and living father exhibited such fine models.

As she was at the age of sixteen when she lost her mother, Mr. Dudley's narratives were strengthened by her own recollection. She had besides the advantage of having commenced her education under a female eye, and consequently of acquiring those soft touches of refined elegance, which the most experienced male instructor cannot communicate.

While Louisa thus rose into woman under her father's care, in a climate in which the luxuriant bounty of Nature, and the fierce contention of the elements, by producing frequent reverses of fortune, alternately excite dissipation and demand fortitude; Marianne experienced under her Grandmother, all the fond indulgence of doating love. If ever the excesses of tenderness are pardonable, they might be in Mrs. Alderson's circumstances. She had lost an amiable and only daughter, enchanting as a companion, and estimable as a friend; whose society afforded her the greatest delight, whose conduct
and

and character reflected honour upon herself. It was natural to view the child which her daughter had bequeathed her, with an affection rising to agonizing sensibility; to consider it as a pledge from an inhabitant of another world, a relique snatched from the grave, a bond of union between herself and the glorified spirit of its immortal mother. Less firm than Mr. Dudley, though not less attached both to the living and the dead, she regarded her Marianne as possessing a kind of hereditary claim to perfection, and almost supposed that the necessity of culture was superseded by the superior excellence of the parent plant.

The characters of the young ladies will be fully developed in the ensuing pages, but unwilling to omit any thing which custom has rendered necessary to writers of my class, I will say something of their personal attractions.

Louisa's figure was tall and elegant, her eyes expressed intelligence and ingenuous
 B 4 modesty,

modesty. Her features were more agreeable than beautiful, and her manner, though in general rather placidly reserved than obtrusive or sparkling, was frequently animated by the lively graces of youth. Yet even in those gayer moments her mirth indicated an informed, well-regulated mind. Though her education had extended to particulars not usually attended to by females, there was nothing in her conversation to excite the apprehensions which gentlemen are apt to entertain of learned ladies. Science in her might be compared to a light placed behind a veil of gauze, which, without being itself apparent, sheds a softened radiance over each surrounding object.

To all who admire beauty in its softest and most feminine dress, Marianne Dudley must have appeared uncommonly attractive. Her features were formed with delicate symmetry, her blue eyes swam in sensibility, and the beautiful transparency of her complexion seemed designed to convey to the admiring beholder

beholder every varying sentiment of her mind. Her looks expressed what indeed she was, tremblingly alive to all the softer passions. Though the gentle timidity of her temper had preserved her from the usual effects of early indulgence, it rendered her peculiarly unfit to encounter even those common calamities humanity must endure. Her natural good health had hitherto preserved her from bodily sufferings; and Mrs. Alderson had never permitted her to know a sorrow which could either be alleviated or removed.

A little time previous to the return of her father and sister from the West Indies, her Grandmother's death rendered her possessed of a fortune of fifty thousand pounds, of which, though only nineteen, it was that Lady's dying request she should be the uncontrolled mistress. Thus blessed with youth, health, beauty, and affluence, what was wanting to render her felicity complete? I doubt not but the younger part of my readers are inclined to think that I shall describe her as
too happy.

Mr. Dudley, though he had consented from unexceptionable motives to the separation of his children, ever lamented the circumstance as likely to check the expansion of the filial and sisterly affections. About the time of Mrs. Alderfon's last illness, discouraged by the terrible devastations of a hurricane, he abandoned the schemes of improvement he had projected upon his estates, and returning with Louisa into England, offered himself to Marianne as her natural guardian and protector. That young lady's heart was too full of sensibility not to be affected by the manly tenderness of a father, and the affectionate endearments of a sister, from whom she had been so long separated. She readily accepted their invitation to reside with them, and it was with a view to her proper accommodation that Mr. Dudley engaged the spacious mansion at which in my preceding chapter I announced his arrival. Miss Marianne was not present when my sagacious neighbours decided upon the characters of
the

the Dudleys, having determined to spend a few weeks with an intimate friend, previous to her design of fixing her abode under the paternal roof.

CHAP. III.

A fine instance of modern susceptibility introduces a delicate discussion, which is left to some brighter genius to determine.

FROM this excursive view of characters above the general level, I return with the delight of a bird flying to her nest, to common life, and the dear society in which I spend my hours.

I suppose it was from perceiving even the *voluble spirit* of female conversation droop when unsupported by the presence of gentlemen, that the ancient mythologists constantly grouped Cupid with the Graces, and introduced Apollo into the circle of the Muses. Though the comparison will not perhaps apply in all parts, we ladies of Danbury

had our conversations enlivened by the presence of a Cupid and an Apollo too, in the persons of Captain Target, a militia officer, first cousin to a Baronet, a gentleman of unquestionable honour; and of Mr. Alsop, the heir of an eminent Attorney, who having amassed a considerable fortune by business, educated his son in what he esteemed the distinguishing mark of a gentleman, *Idleness*.

Against these Beaux the fair Cardamum planted all the artillery of love. She long ago, on examining her own heart upon the grand question, had determined marriage to be essential to her happiness; but on advancing to the next point in debate, who should be the man, she found herself totally unable to decide, and her heart wandered from one to the other as local circumstances directed. Every one knows that the parish church in the country answers the end of places of public resort in London, by giving fashionable people opportunities of sporting a whim, making critical observations, or attracting the

the attention of the other sex. I have often seen my fair friend's eyes, even in the most pathetick parts of Mr. Medium's discourse, wander from the Captain's hat, when decorated with the military plume, to Mr. Alsop's servants in their new liveries, and pitied the perplexities which agitated her gentle bosom. If family, martial address, knowledge of the world, and an infinitude of small talk, recommended the accomplished Target; no less did the charms of youth, wealth, and great docility of temper plead in favour of the rich Alsop. Without pretending to that penetration I decried in a former chapter, it was easy to discover the present state of her heart; as it was an invariable rule to speak of the favourite of the week in terms of studied contempt or marked censure. While her affection rebounded from one gentleman to the other, I was easy; but when for several days together she talked of the conceited foppish airs Target gave himself, or of the
poorest

poorest of all poor creatures, Allop, I trembled for her peace of mind.

The rivals continued to live together in terms of perfect intimacy. I must suppose they were ignorant of the storms they excited in the breast of beauty; for had they known the state of the lady's heart, could modern friendship have been proof to the temptation of securing so invaluable a prize? I am confirmed in my opinion by reflecting, that extreme humility and superabundant diffidence are the unhappy failings of the present race of young men. They think too meanly of themselves and too exaltedly of us, to dare to aspire to the possession of the excellence they at distance adore; and though condescending sweetness and easy access are no less the characteristick of the present race of beauties, their worshippers are so apt to consider them as inexorable divinities rather than as placable mortals, that hopeless of success they retire from their altars in the dumb silence of despair.

But

But I will consider the case in another point of view, and propose a question which I hope some sister novelist will discuss, as it is an extremely delicate point of honour, and will bear amplifying through at least fifty pages. Supposing the gentlemen actually perceived the state of the lady's heart, could they consistently with friendship and generosity make any efforts to secure it entirely to themselves? Was it not infinitely more congenial to those refined principles and delicate distinctions, invented by several French writers, and adopted by our own, to leave her entirely to herself, and neither to do any thing transcendently praise-worthy, or to say any thing eminently clever, to influence her decision? I cannot determine this point, but will proceed in the narrative way to state, that certainly neither of them was guilty of the crime of endeavouring to detain the angel which thus hovered between them.

It would have been a solecism in good breeding, if Captain Target and Mr. Alfop
had

had omitted to pay their devoirs to the Dudley family. The Captain only waited to know whether the cellars were well stocked, and the table hospitably supplied, to propose to his friend a morning walk to Stannadine. Mr. Alsop readily acquiesced in the proposal, though from different motives. Happy as he was in many respects, he was tormented by the attacks of a cruel invincible enemy, who, in spite of all his efforts, haunted all his waking hours. This enemy was Time. Such is the strange intricacy of human affairs. It was originally bestowed by Providence as an estimable blessing, an improveable talent, the source of present enjoyment and future felicity.

Full of the heroic design of killing this monster, my heroes sallied forth, and were received by Mr. Dudley with politeness and attention. Captain Target readily fell into conversation; they talked of the West-Indies, its important commercial advantages and natural beauties; the military gentleman enlivening the discourse with anecdotes of several

several

several gallant officers, with whom he became acquainted during the summer encampments. Mr. Alfop was silent, contemplating the form of Mr. Dudley's buckles, and wondering if they were more fashionable than his own.

As it was the merchant's custom to banish as much as possible the little rules which etiquette unnecessarily prescribes, the strangers, though it was a first visit, consented to stay dinner, and Mr. Dudley, to employ part of the morning, led them the tour of his pleasure grounds, pointing out some little improvements he proposed to make. To these Captain Target assented with warm approbation, while the modest Alfop, though he equally understood and admired Mr. Dudley's taste, contented himself with the harmless epithets of "vastly pretty, vastly clever indeed."

From the shrubbery they returned to the drawing-room, where Miss Dudley received them with the smile of welcome and the
blush

blush of delicacy. Captain Target poured forth a volley of compliments, but could he have attended to any thing but the sound of his own voice, he might have perceived that the lady to whom they were addressed, knew how to estimate her own worth too well, to be elevated by casual attentions or superficial praise. Mr. Alsop not being so fluent in his expressions, contented himself with silent admiration, never once withdrawing his eyes from Miss Dudley, till the servant summoned them to the dining-room.

If Captain Target had been moderate in his approbation before, the present scene would have thrown him into ecstasies. Every thing was excellent; he eat voraciously, met with all his favourite dishes, with wine peculiarly adapted to his taste, and at the conclusion of his visit he entreated Mr. Dudley to allow him the honour of considering him in the light of an intimate. Mr. Alsop's bow urged the same request, to which Mr. Dudley politely assented.

On

On their return home, Mr. Alsop, who had pondered upon the events of the day, without being able to shape the chaos of his own mind into any determined form, resolved to sound his friend's *real* opinion, that they might at least have the happiness of agreeing in the same story. A prudent scheme, and the more necessary, as the absence or presence of the applauded persons frequently produced a wide difference in the Captain's sentiments. Finding him however sincere upon the present occasion, he commenced a warm admirer of the family at Stannadine, and heroically resolving to defend the cause of injured merit, called upon Miss Cardamum the next morning with the express design of telling her that he really thought Mr. Dudley a very good sort of man, and his daughter a pretty agreeable young lady ; adding as a clencher, that Captain Target said so too.

Whoever considers how rude it is to dispute any opinion which a lady has advanced,
or

or how highly affronting it is to commend the features of another in the presence of a sister belle, may form a faint idea of Miss Cardamum's resentment, heightened by the painful sentiments which love and jealousy excited. She darted on Mr. Alsop a look of fiery indignation, which on recollection she turned into the smile of sarcastical contempt, complimenting him upon his *superior* share of discernment. Then turning to some ladies who were present, she expatiated upon the merits of young Mr. Inkle the new draper, declared he was not only well bred, but handsome, and so respectfully civil in his deportment, that she should not at all wonder at his marrying a woman of superior education and large fortune. Amongst Mr. Inkle's merits, his never contradicting any body was pointed out with such marked encomiums, that poor Mr. Alsop, though not very acute in his feelings, could not but observe how highly he had offended; and feeling his courage unequal to the task of endeavouring

vouring to mitigate her resentment, confusedly withdrew. As he was not at the card assembly that evening, I presume he spent it alone in all the agonies of distress.

Happily our sex is of too gentle a nature to suffer our resentments to be as lasting as they are violent. Miss Cardamum met both gentlemen in her walk next morning, and courtesied with her usual affability: nay, her kind consideration led her still further, for anxious to prevent any ill consequences arising from her late encomium on Mr. Ingle, she took care to tell her companion Miss Dorothea Medium, loud enough for the gentlemen to hear, that though the man was very well in his shop, and behaved civil to his customers, it would be very wrong to treat him in the same manner as one would genteel people; for tradesfolks were very apt to give themselves airs, if genteel people took notice of them.

CHAP. IV.

Containing what may be termed a literary curiosity, being an extract from the journal of an old maid.

BEFORE the character of the elder part of the Dudley family could be decided upon in a satisfactory manner, a new star arose in the horizon. I almost doubt whether the first appearance of Helen at the Court of Priam excited more wonder and surprise amongst the Trojan ladies, than did the lovely Marianne Dudley, when in the full blaze of natural charms, aided by all the graceful appendages which tasteful art could bestow,—she burst upon us at our monthly assembly in full splendor. So incontestable was *her* claim to the praise of beauty, that even the invidious were hurried into applause. Miss Cardamum was the first who recovered from the general consternation. She ventured to observe that though her features were very regular, she thought they
were

were rather deficient in expression. Mrs. Medium pursued the hint, and lamented the want of a certain dignity of manner and look, of which Lady Seraphina was immensely fond, adding, "Now there's my Dorothea, though a plain girl, (hold up your head my dear,) she has more of that turn of countenance which her poor dear Ladyship so much admired."

The incertitude of public opinion has been exemplified by histories of degraded heroes and persecuted patriots. I choose to illustrate it by an instance from common life. As it was very natural for inquiry to be busy about an object that so strongly arrested attention, we soon discovered Marianne's independent fortune. Rumour on this occasion acted in her usual way, increasing it at least to one hundred thousand pounds; for the many-tongued goddess always enlarges the possessions of the wealthy, in the same proportion as she diminishes the resources of the unfortunate.

We

We were likewise told that Mr. Dudley and Louisa were almost dependent upon Marianne, who, like most favourites of fortune, was capricious, vain, and haughty; and returned their kind solicitude to please with whimsical indifference. No sooner did we know that the former objects of our dislike were less happy than we supposed, than all their good qualities burst in a flood upon us, and we alternately pitied and admired the modest, the sensible, and affable Louisa.

These tender sentiments were confirmed by fresh news from Stannadine. John the errand-man had told Betty at the Post Office, that a fine gentleman was expected as a suitor to the younger Miss. Every lady in Danbury was now out of patience that such a little chitty face should be preferred to her elder sister: it furnished several pathetic dissertations on the bad taste and mercenary temper of men, and brought back to the remembrance of our society the golden days of youth, when female merit, unless obstinately
bent

bent on a single state, was sure of procuring the regard of the other sex. Mrs. Eleanor Singleton and myself enlarged upon the difficulty we had to avoid being actually worried into matrimony, in spite of our avowed declarations to the contrary.

I have often lamented the situation of many good ladies, who like myself may be said almost to subsist upon news, and are often forced to devour very unwholesome aliment. The events which *really* happen in a small neighbourhood, are not sufficient to furnish the supplies conversation eternally requires, without the aid of fiction. I have often, though encumbered with my umbrella and pattens, carried a piece of intelligence round the town in the morning, which in the evening I was forced to step out and contradict. An extract from my weekly journal will prove this observation.

MONDAY.

Mr. Pelham is come to Stannadine—
They will soon be married, for the mantua-

maker went over this morning, doubtless to receive orders about wedding-clothes. Memorandum. Miss Cardamum says they will have the clothes from a London warehouse, and that the groom went to town yesterday about them.

TUESDAY.

Not quite certain which of the ladies Mr. Pelham addresses. He was seen walking this morning with Miss Dudley.

WEDNESDAY.

Miss Marianne has positively refused him—She may be a long time before she has another offer.

THURSDAY.

It is very odd, if he is refused, that he still stays at Stannadine. Perhaps he intends to offer himself to Louisa.

FRIDAY.

We have all been mistaken. The House-keeper told my butcher when he went there for orders, that Mr. Pelham is not come as a lover, but only as an old friend of the family.

Finally, .

Finally, after Mr. Pelham's person and character had run through all the changes of handsome and ugly, young and old, rich and poor, amiable and disagreeable, we sent him back to his own habitation on Saturday. Now, though we could not discover the mystery, there really was something in Mr. Pelham's visit.

Ever since Marianne's arrival at her father's, Miss Dudley perceived an unusual gravity in her air and manner; and with true sisterly affection as well as delicacy, endeavoured to encourage her to reveal the cause by a soothing tenderness of behaviour, rather than by a prying curiosity, which indeed never deserves, and seldom possesses confidence. The timid Marianne at length ventured to unbosom herself to her sister, by owning that during her visit at Lady Milton's, she had received declarations of love from Mr. Pelham, her Ladyship's nephew, a gentleman of handsome fortune and unblemished character.

Louisa congratulated her upon so respectable a conquest, and expressed the transport she would feel at seeing her placed under the protection of a worthy husband ; but added, that probably she was not yet able to judge, whether Mr. Pelham really possessed the requisites that were essential to her ideas of happiness.

Marianne's uncertainty upon this subject did not arise from any doubt she entertained respecting the gentlemen's merits, or the possibility of her approving him. She was fearful lest Miss Milton's affections should have been engaged by her cousin, in which case she would die a thousand deaths before she would be the cause of blasting the tender blossom of her Eliza's latent love. She had not indeed any grounds for this suspicion, but the friendship which subsisted between the ladies was of a romantick kind, and consequently was too refined in its hopes and fears to be adapted to ordinary capacities.

Louisa was not casuist enough to determine

mine the intricate question, whether Marianne ought to reject Mr. Pelham, on the possibility that Miss Milton might be in love with him. Knowing no other rules of action than the plain laws of equity and honour, how could she decide on a point, which I may say was finely obscured by surrounding difficulties? Had she pleaded for Mr. Pelham, Marianne had a variety of instances of high heroick virtue to produce, not drawn indeed from actual observations of life, but from her favourite studies. She had long been an attentive reader of memoirs and adventures, and had transplanted into her gentle bosom all the soft feelings and highly refined sensibilities of the respective heroines.

After several days of cruel perplexity, in which she at length resolved to sacrifice love (for she doubted not her own regard for Mr. Pelham) upon the altar of friendship; a servant arrived with a packet from Lady Milton. The first letter addressed to Mr. Dudley I shall transcribe.

SIR,

Though many years have interven'd,
since your departure from England terminated an acquaintance from which I received the sincerest pleasure, I do not doubt your recognising the writing of an old friend with joy. The warm esteem which your excellent wife expressed for me and my late sister Pelham, and the happy hours we passed together in early life, induces me to urge my present request with an air of confidence. The many excellencies of your younger daughter have made a deep impression upon my nephew's heart; I flatter myself, Sir, that upon inquiry you will find both his morals and fortune unexceptionable. Should he be so fortunate as to obtain the approbation of the young lady and yourself, I cannot express the transport I shall feel at receiving the child of my most valued friend into my family. My daughter, who loves her Marianne with more than a sister's fondness, is in raptures
at

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‘ at discovering her cousin’s attachment, and
‘ laments bitterly that a disorder in her eyes
‘ prevents her from addressing her dear cor-
‘ respondent upon the subject. Mr. Pelham
‘ writes by the same conveyance. Allow
‘ me, Sir, to hope that his proposals will be
‘ as agreeable to you, as the sweet object of
‘ his affections is to us, and that you will fix
‘ an early day for the visit he requests per-
‘ mission to make. With respectful compli-
‘ ments to yourself and Miss Dudley, with
‘ whom I hope soon to renew a personal ac-
‘ quaintance, and kindest love to my dear
‘ niece elect, (pardon the freedom of that
‘ expression,) I remain,

‘ Dear Sir,

‘ Yours affectionately,

‘ E. MILTON.

C H A P. V.

Female irresolution may proceed from too much as well as from too little refinement.

A MIND disposed to enjoy all the agreeable circumstances this world affords, would have considered the letter with which I concluded my last chapter as a pleasant event, at least as an indisputable proof that the Miltons actually desired the proposed alliance. But Marianne Dudley was too refined to be thus easily satisfied. She doubted not that her Ladyship stated, as far as she knew, the real cause of Eliza's distressing silence, but could delicacy, while labouring under the pangs of hopeless love, do otherwise than endeavour to conceal its tortures, under the assumed air of indisposition? No, it was too evident; Eliza was certainly in love.

Such were the reflexions which agitated her bosom, when her father with a smiling air delivered the letter for her perusal. Lou-
isa

isa had informed him on his consulting her about their contents, that she believed her sister was not indifferent to Mr. Pelham's merits; how then could he account for the strong distress visible in Marianne's countenance: she however, recollecting that her sorrows were of too delicate a nature for her father to understand, thought it right, if possible, to keep them from his observation, and hurried out of the room just in time to conceal a flood of tears.

Mr. Dudley returned to Louisa to explain this extraordinary circumstance, who perhaps thinking her sister a little whimsical, disguised her knowledge of the real cause, and pleaded the perplexing terrors an ingenuous and reflecting mind must feel at the idea of intrusting its happiness to a stranger's care. She took an opportunity of following Marianne to her dressing-room as soon as she could, and found her just recovering from a profound reverie. A happy and heroic thought had occurred. By receiving Mr. Pelham's

addresses

addresses she would be enabled to judge of the state of Miss Milton's heart; and if by her pining despair her latent love was confirmed, generous friendship might at any time renounce its own happiness, and even at the altar resign the expectant bridegroom, who, if unwilling to accept the substituted charmer, would be *no* hero.

She communicated this plan to Louisa, who, happy that a treaty so agreeable to her father might at any rate commence, informed him immediately of her sister's acquiescence. A letter of invitation was in consequence dispatched, and the happy lover soon appeared at Stannadine.

If an open, ingenuous countenance, manly sense, and easy accommodating manners may allowably inspire the beholders with a sort of intuitive esteem; Mr. Pelham, who possessed all these advantages, had a claim to the warm affection with which Mr. and Miss Dudley received him. They felicitated each other on the agreeable prospect which the
proposed

proposed acquaintance offered ; and forgetting that the tie of relationship was not yet confirmed, received him with all the kindness of a brother and son. He brought Marianne a letter from Miss Milton, dictated with such apparent ease and heartfelt satisfaction, that even her fertile imagination could scarcely start any fresh doubts on that head.

Yet she was not happy. She now began to be apprehensive that Mr. Pelham was not the kind of character with whom she could enjoy that perfect and uninterrupted felicity which she was certain the union of two kindred minds afforded. In the first place, he seemed much more gay and lively than was consistent with the painful suspense in which courtship ought to keep the lover's heart. His manner was unembarrassed, which was wrong ; he was comfortable in her absence ; her presence indeed seemed to give him satisfaction, but not of the transporting kind she expected. He maintained his own opinions in conversation, and though he treated

her with respect, yet not with deference. In his addresses as a lover, he fell far short of that kneeling ecstatic tenderness, that restless solicitude, that profound veneration, in short, those thousand nameless refinements, which some call absurdities and some delicacies, but by which men, who really love, aspire to gain the woman of their heart. Consequently might she not fear that his attachment was not of a kind to render their future lives a state of paradisiacal bliss?

If my readers suppose that the lady's fastidiousness arose from vanity, arrogance, or spleen, they mistake the character I mean to delineate. It was long ago observed that the virtues lie between two opposite vices; thus is all our attention awakened to keep the straight path of rectitude, as the least deviation leads us into one of the extremes. From over-strained humility, from gentleness which had increased to timidity, and from sensibility indulged till it became a weakness, from these causes I say, and from a wrong estimate

mate of life, the errors and sorrows of Marianne Dudley are to be derived.

In her character I wish to exhibit the portrait of an amiable and ingenuous mind, solicitous to excel, and desirous to be happy, but destitute of natural vigour or acquired stability; forming to itself a romantick standard, to which nothing human ever attained; perplexed by imaginary difficulties; sinking under fancied evils; destroying its own peace by the very means which it takes to secure it; and acting with a degree of folly beneath the common level, through its desire of aspiring above the usual limits of female excellence.

Lest an objection should be started, that the exhibition of such a character may be of disservice to the general cause of morality, I shall urge my reasons for maintaining a contrary opinion. I have looked on life with deep attention, and foresee no evils likely to ensue from impressing upon the minds of youth, as soon and as deeply as possible, just notions

notions of the journey they are about to take, and just opinions of their fellow-travellers. I am persuaded that the imaginary duties which the extreme of modern refinement prescribes, are never practised but at the expence of those solid virtues, whose superior excellence has stood the test of ages. I conceive that the rules prescribed to us as social and accountable beings, are fully sufficient to exercise all our industry while in this transitory state. I wish to ask the fair enthusiasts who indulge in all the extravagance of heroick generosity, romantick love, and exuberant friendship, whether they really suppose it possible to improve upon the model which Christianity (our best comfort in this world and sure guide to the next) presents for our imitation. If not, I would tell them, that simple but inestimable code presents no puzzling question to tear the divided heart by contrary duties. It speaks of life as a mutable scene, and it admonishes us to enjoy its blessings with moderation,
and

and to endure its evils with patience. It tells us that man is as variable as the world he inhabits, that imperfections mingle with the virtues of the best; and by the fine idea of a state of warfare, urges us to constant circumspection and unwearied attention. From this mixture of good and evil it directs our pursuit after the former, by teaching us to *curb* our passions, and to *moderate* our desires; to expect with diffidence, enjoy with gratitude, and resign with submission. It commands us, conscious of our own failings, to be indulgent to the errors of others. Upon the basis of mutual wants, general imperfection, and universal kindred, it builds the fair structure of candour and benevolence.

And do these writers, whose works generally fall into the hands of the younger part of the softer sex, *indeed* suppose that they serve the interests of this divine institution, when they excite the dangerous excess of the passions, by representing the violence of love, grief, despair, and jealousy, not only

as amiable frailties, but as commendable qualities? Ought suicide ever to be introduced by a Christian author, but as a brand of infamy to mark characters peculiarly detestable? Should the love of a man to a married woman ever be softened into an innocent attachment, or described as a tender weakness which he *cannot* conquer, consequently rather as the error of nature and necessity, than of choice? Why is the young mind led to form hopes which cannot be realized, and thus, by barbing the shafts of disappointment, to add to the already ample stock of human calamities? In youth we start upon a race, in which the difficulties of the way generally increase as we draw nearer to the goal; and instead of strengthening the resolution, and bracing up the soul for the contest, modern writers generally teach us to shrink at the first shock of evil; to melt in tender softness at woes of our own creating, and thus to turn with disgust from life before the sun of our existence has advanced to its meridian. These

These romantick notions indeed generally leave us on our journey; but what is the consequence? Repeated disappointments sour the temper, we grow querulous complainers, disagreeable to others and burthensome to ourselves; and at last, not unfrequently do we arraign the wisdom of Providence for not having rendered this world a perfect, instead of a probationary state; for not having given us the felicity it never promised, or for having implanted in us desires which we ought to subdue, since our Creator meant them rather as trials of fortitude than as sources of gratification.

CHAP. VI.

The Author endeavours to get rid of the serious humour which contaminated the last chapter.

TO those who have had the courage to follow me through the serious conclusion of the last chapter, no apologies for its contents

tents will I hope be necessary; and I am certain all my well-bred readers will exercise their usual privilege of skipping over the uninteresting page. For their sakes, therefore, I shall immediately resume the narrative, premising, to conciliate their regard, that though I live in retirement, I know too much of the manners of the world, ever to expect even momentary attention to a moral reproof, when it attacks a reigning foible. And indeed, since youth and affluence generally protect their possessors from many real calamities, and as a certain portion of sorrow seems necessary in the composition of human affairs; it would perhaps be cruel to persuade the gay world to forget the many *pretty little* subjects of complaint, and all the agreeable vicissitudes which the fairy regions of *imaginary* distress amply supply.

In returning to my history I shall illustrate this position. Can the calm satisfaction a young woman, who thinks and acts in a common way, would receive from
the

the addresses of such a lover as Mr. Pelham, be half so enchanting as the sweet perturbations, the delightful emotions, which a superior turn of sentiment excited in Marianne's breast? Now elevated by the hope that he would refine into an Orondates, now agonized by the idea that he had nothing of true sensibility in his composition. From her early childhood she had maintained a voluminous correspondence with Miss Milton; but on the present occasion she was deprived of all the consolation which pouring out her soul to her Eliza would have afforded, by that young lady's warm esteem for her cousin. Miss Dudley's sincere affection and acknowledged prudence pointed her out as a proper confidante, but unfortunately she wanted the grand requisite, for Louisa had so little sentiment, that she was more inclined to laugh at her sister's apprehensions, *than to pour balm into the wound*. Marianne was therefore compelled to confine her sorrows almost wholly to her own bosom.

On the contrary, Mr. Pelham was so thoroughly satisfied with his reception that he impatiently wished for an alliance with a family truly estimable in all its branches. The romantick turn of his fair mistress did not indeed escape his penetration, and he once dared to rally her upon the subject; but perceiving it only increased the seriousness of her features, he carefully avoided again introducing it. He had delicacy enough to be tender of the failings of the woman whom he loved, and enough of love to be convinced, that the sweetness of her temper and the goodness of her heart would conquer the little errors which a romantick propensity had engrafted upon her inexperienced mind; at least would prevent them from ever giving pain to an affectionate husband. He hoped a little commerce with the world, to which she was almost a stranger, would divert her thoughts from their present train, and he anticipated the agreeable prospect of her laughing in a few years at her former enthusiasm.

Soon

Soon after he left Stannadine he was invited to Milton-Hall, to join in the festivities which were intended to welcome the return of her Ladyship's only son from the Indies; where he had resided several years in a military station, and amassed a fortune sufficient to restore that ancient family to the respectability it formerly possessed. At this happy meeting, Mr. Pelham's agreeable prospects were discussed amongst other family topics. He spoke of the merits of Mr. and Miss Dudley in such warm terms of recommendation, that Sir William Milton's impatience to be introduced to these estimable characters, could not confine its desire of gratification till after his cousin's nuptials. The privileges allowed to an accepted lover, seemed to justify a request to accompany him on his next visit to the Dudleys, and Mr. Pelham, not a little proud of his Marianne's attractions, had no objection to introduce her to his friend.

Nature

Nature indeed had been far less liberal to Sir William than to the other gentleman. To judge by his countenance, a gloomy suspicious soul seemed to lour from under his dark bent eye-brows, and the air of conscious hauteur, which accompanied all his actions, rendered even his condescensions painful and mortifying. He had been too long accustomed to the servile adulation of the east, to recollect that freeborn Britons are seldom inclined to admit the claims of wealth and arrogance, if men possess no superior title to respect and esteem. So striking was his appearance, that even the candid Louisa told her sister, that, if Mr. Pelham's countenance had been as unpleasing, she would have considered her apprehensions of future unhappiness to have been rational.

But though Miss Dudley drew these unfavourable conclusions from Sir William's manner, he saw in her's an enchanting grace which enforced his approbation. Never did easy sweetness of temper, modest sense, polished affability, and strict propriety

propriety of expression and behaviour, appear more amiable than in the worthy Louisa. These were the qualities which he most desired in a companion for life, and conceiving the proposals he had it in his power to make too ample to admit of hesitation, he soon requested a private conference with Mr. Dudley, and asked his permission to address his elder daughter.

The fond father would have rejoiced, if the man who aspired to the justly esteemed darling of his heart had been more apparently amiable. He answered with hesitation, His daughter's choice was free, and he should limit his interference to the character of an adviser; but he added, the liberality of Sir William's proposals required at least frankness on his part. It might be expected from his style of living, that Louisa's fortune would prove adequate to the expectations Sir William Milton might justly pretend to. It was unhappily the reverse. Indeed on declining the mercantile business, he imagined
he

he had secured an handsome income, but the destruction of that part of Barbadoes in which his estate lay, together with the doubtful credit of a great mercantile house, in whose concerns he had from motives of private friendship rashly embarked all his personal property, rendered his daughter's fortune at best but problematical; and he feared he could rate her value at little more than a mind, which would not be destitute of comforts, even in depressed circumstances.

Sir William was more gratified than disappointed at this discovery. The idea of laying a wife under an obligation was rather flattering to his pride; and since his fortune was too large to confine his views in plans of expenditure, he was desirous of marrying a woman who having no claim of her own to affluence, might enjoy the wealth to which he gave her a title, with exultation and gratitude. He told Mr. Dudley, that, thanks to fortune and his own exertions, he had no reason to consider pecuniary conveniences. Miss
Dudley

Dudley was the woman he should prefer to all others, and he even wished her to bring him nothing more than her merit and her affections.

There was such an air of generosity in the above declaration, that Mr. Dudley condemned himself for having yielded to erroneous and uncharitable prepossessions. He promised to introduce him to his daughter, as an admirer whose pretensions met his approbation; and then retired to consider of the most likely means to render his mediation successful. He recollected that when they discussed the characters of their visitants the preceding evening, Louisa had spoken of Sir William in terms of such strong disapprobation, and drawn a parallel between him and Mr. Pelham so manifestly to Sir William's disadvantage, that Mr. Dudley thought proper gently to check her warmth, as rather indicative of the rashness of a precipitate conclusion, than of the dispassionate, candid judgment he wished her to form.

She yielded with placid submission to his reproofs, and allowed the force of the extenuating circumstances he urged in Sir William's behalf; but, reflecting upon the circumstance, Mr. Dudley thought he perceived her acquiescence had rather proceeded from deference than from conviction.

C H A P. VII.

Extremely dull.

MR. Dudley hastened to Louisa's apartment, impatient to discuss the important subject which occupied his attention. He intended to state with emphasis and precision the reasons which induced him to accede to Sir William's offers, and to exert his own influence over Louisa's mind to ensure their success; but ere he had proceeded far, the young lady's apprehensions took the alarm. She sunk upon her knees, and clasping her father's hands, with eyes swimming in tears, and looks full of anxiety and consternation, exclaimed, My dearest Sir,
do

do not marry me to Sir William Milton."

To give pain to that bosom which had been the faithful repository of his secrets and sorrows; to afflict the dutiful and amiable child, to whose love and sympathy he had ever fled as a refuge from injury, and a cure for disappointment; was more than Mr. Dudley's resolution could support. He tenderly raised her, assured her of his unremitting tenderness, and hurried out of the room to give vent to the expression of that concern his swelling heart could scarcely retain.

When alone, and removed from the influence of her powerful tears, he recollected that till she was in possession of the whole argument, her decision could not be just. The sentiments respecting filial confidence which she had always entertained, the known propriety of her conduct, and the calm command she had ever possessed over her affections, left him no room to suppose that her dislike to Sir William proceeded from the

addresses of a preferred, though unacknowledged lover. He at least determined to make another attempt, and fearing again to expose his resolution to the influence of her soft distress, had recourse to his pen, and wrote the following letter :

‘ TO MISS DUDLEY.

‘ However lively my dear child’s reluctance to read this address may be, it cannot exceed what I feel, while by writing it I discharge a certain, though painful duty. Let a similar inducement urge you, my Louisa, to weigh my arguments with attention. When you have done this, with all the temper and consideration of which you are mistress, I give you my word that your answer shall be decisive. The subject in discussion shall never more be revived, if you persist in your refusal.

‘ Have I too highly rated your confidence in me, by supposing that you are actually free from the impulse of a prior attachment, and consequently at liberty to govern

' govern your heart by the dictates of your
 ' judgment? If, my love, from exuberant
 ' delicacy or extreme timidity, you have
 ' concealed from me a secret of such impor-
 ' tance, this is the moment of discovery.
 ' To urge you in favour of Sir William,
 ' while you feel a preference for another,
 ' would at once be cruel and unjust. Fear
 ' no upbraidings from a father: my arms
 ' are open to embrace you, my heart con-
 ' firms your pardon, and my best advice and
 ' assistance are ready any way in which you
 ' shall require their exertion; but till you
 ' assure me to the contrary, I will suppose
 ' you absolutely disengaged.

' Did all men see you with my partial eyes,
 ' I should have a proposal to announce, at
 ' least as unexceptionable as that which
 ' awaits the acceptance of your happy sister.
 ' I do not scruple to own that neither the
 ' person or manners of Sir William Milton
 ' are conciliating. His virtues appear to be
 ' of the stern rather than of the amiable cast,

' and I should conceive, that like our first
 ' King Charles, he would soil the gloss of
 ' generosity by an ungracious method of be-
 ' stowing favours. But when the heart is
 ' right, candour will excuse the rest. Were
 ' you less happy in the prudent gentleness of
 ' your own temper, I would not recommend
 ' an union with one who will probably claim
 ' indulgence. I depend upon the influence
 ' of your sweetness, to soften his asperity,
 ' or at least to enable you to support its ef-
 ' fects with patience and cheerfulness. You
 ' have too much good sense to expect perfec-
 ' tion either in character or situation, and
 ' though an accommodating temper is essen-
 ' tial to happiness in most marriages, I think
 ' my Louisa might be happy if her husband
 ' possessed it but in an inferior degree.

' I build my hopes on the just sense he has
 ' of your merits. He generously supposes
 ' them an ample equivalent for all the ad-
 ' vantages wealth can bestow. How flatter-
 ' ing is this opinion to a doating father!

' How

‘ How satisfactory, when he reflects that his
‘ darling child’s virtues are of a cast that will
‘ bear the scrutinizing eye of inquiry ! That
‘ they will realize the expectations of love,
‘ and elevate it into esteem ! Am I too
‘ sanguine in supposing that a man, who can
‘ make the liberal offers he has done, will
‘ be influenced by the sweet and candid
‘ partner he has purchased with his liberty
‘ and his fortune ?

‘ You are, I know, above pecuniary mo-
‘ tives ; on this head, however, I shall in-
‘ troduce myself. Unwilling to disturb your
‘ peace, I have as much as possible diminish-
‘ ed my fears for the security of the fleet, in
‘ which the little property I could preserve
‘ from the wreck of my fortunes in the West-
‘ Indies, is embarked. I have also wholly
‘ concealed my doubts, which are now al-
‘ most certainties, respecting the responsibi-
‘ lity of the Messieurs Tonnereaus. Sir
‘ William knows on what a doubtful contin-
‘ gence your fortune depends, and I never

' shall forget the air of pleasure his counte-
 ' nance assumed at the discovery; as if he
 ' till then doubted the validity of his preten-
 ' sions to you. Consider, my child, if my
 ' apprehensions are just (and I assure you I
 ' did not lightly entertain them) how I am to
 ' support the thought that my rash and fatal
 ' confidence has reduced you to penury.
 ' You will, I know, endure adversity with
 ' dignity and patience, but every smile in
 ' which you meekly dress your countenance
 ' to receive me, will be a dagger in my con-
 ' scious heart.

' To you, who have been bred in afflu-
 ' ence, the perplexities of a limited fortune
 ' are inconceivable while at a distance; but
 ' when experienced they will be most poig-
 ' nantly felt. I knew them, my child, in
 ' my early years. My excellent father pos-
 ' sessed every desirable blessing except a com-
 ' petence. He was, you know, a Clergy-
 ' man, living upon small perferment. His
 ' numerous family was at once his delight and
 ' his

his perplexity, the source of all his pleasures, and the object of all his fears. Even his firm philosophick mind and steady confidence in Heaven, sometimes yielded to the distresses which the numerous wants of his children occasioned; and the fear of leaving his almost adored wife, and his orphans destitute, to the mercy of the world, grew as his health declined almost insupportable.

From such pangs, my Louisa, I would secure you, by an union with a worthy, though perhaps not a highly amiable man. Personal considerations are beneath your attention. Defect in character is the unavoidable lot of humanity. If you have discovered no reasons for disapprobation, stronger than those you stated last night, and your heart is *totally* disengaged, I trust your affections may be taught by gratitude to flow in the channel which judgment prescribes. If your repugnance is still insurmountable, do not add to your perplexity by the apprehension of my displeasure.

' The reasons which influenced my child are
 ' at least entitled to my respect. Whether
 ' I possess a cottage or a palace, my Louisa
 ' is most welcome to the comforts it affords.
 ' The companion of my prosperity shall teach
 ' me to support adversity : her happiness not
 ' her aggrandisement is the wish of her

' Most affectionate father,

' RICHARD DUDLEY.'

CHAP. VIII.

*An attempt at novelty. Louisa reluctantly
 consents to admit the addresses of a rich
 young baronet.*

MISS Dudley had scarcely recovered
 from the involuntary shock, which the first
 intimation of Sir William's Milton's attach-
 ment had occasioned, when her father's let-
 ter arrived. She had persuaded herself that
 either entreaty or fortitude might prevent
 the intended tie. The contents of the letter
 would at least have convinced her, that some-
 thing could be urged in justification of Mr.
 Dudley's wishes; but the sentiments of love
 and

and confidence with which it was replete, forcibly appealing to her heart, and calling forth the mingled sentiments of filial piety and strong reluctance, too much agitated her mind to allow her to reason. She sat a few moments trembling and silent, and then burst into tears.

Marianne, who at that moment entered the dressing-room, was shocked at her sister's pale and agitated countenance. She flew towards her: "You are ill, my dear Louisa, for Heaven's sake, speak." Miss Dudley faintly attempted to smile. "My disorder," said she, "is nothing but an apprehensive mind; you have a claim to my confidence. Sir William Milton has made proposals respecting me to my father, which I am grieved to say he approves."

"Ah, my love," exclaimed Marianne, "how similar is our fate! I have endured too much not to pity you; but what are your resolves?" "If possible, to comply with my father's wishes," returned Louisa. "Heroick girl! The resolution is worthy of
 D 6 your-

yourself. I have at last brought my mind to the same determination. Hearts like ours, my Louisa, can never know felicity but in the converse of a kindred soul; yet though our future lives must pass in one sad joyless tenour, it will be a support in our sufferings, to reflect that we have complied with the paternal injunction. This thought will be a balm to all our woes, and will at last render the bed of death easy. I have long ago given up every hope, except what I derive from your affection. My sister in blood and now also in affliction."

Louisa was too seriously discomposed to answer this address in any other way than by a tender pressure of her hand. She begged to be alone. "I must," said she, "be prompt in my reply; as it will be decisive, I ought to deliberate." Marianne expressed how deeply she felt for her, and withdrew.

Louisa now exerting all her natural fortitude, again perused her father's letter. "Shall I," said she, "shrink from a duty,
when

when encouraged by example as well as precept?"

To her father's inquiry respecting a pre-engagement, she fancied she could give a clear and satisfactory negative. She had not entirely escaped the addresses of lovers, but neither their assiduities nor their offers ever excited more than a momentary attention. How then could she explain the violence of her aversion to Sir William? and yet the more she probed her heart, the more sensible she was of her reluctance.

Her father's observation in the succeeding paragraph, respecting the superior merit of her happier sister's lover, brought Mr. Pelham before her eyes, in all that strong light of contrast in which her fancy had often exhibited him. Her imagination winged by the wish, that he, instead of Sir William, had been the lover Mr. Dudley proposed, did not easily return from its excursive flight, to recollect that wishes are the weak resort of a querulous, impassioned mind. Her soul was
above

above envy, and though the brightness of Marianne's prospects seemed to deepen the gloom of her own, she perceived her sister was not in reality happier. By her, the real excellencies of Mr. Pelham's conduct were overlooked, while she continued in fanciful pursuit after an imaginary undefined good. Louisa again endeavoured to avoid the fault she saw in her sister, and to make the best of her own lot; but in endeavouring to think of Sir William, the idea of Mr. Pelham again returned. Her cheek glowed, and perhaps for the first time she had cause to arraign the rectitude of her heart. Deceived by the native openness of her temper, she supposed she was only cultivating the friendship a sister ought to feel for a sister's lover, when her attention was rivetted to all Mr. Pelham's words and actions. Without her own concurrence, or indeed knowledge, her thoughts during her hours of retirement had been chiefly appropriated to him. Conviction flashed upon her soul, and she felt a momentary

mentary humiliation. I say momentary, for no sooner did she discover the 'state of her heart, than she determined that Sir William Milton should not owe his rejection to the preference she secretly entertained for a gentleman, who would soon probably be her sister's husband. Marianne's whimsical irresolution afforded her neither hope nor justification; Mr. Pelham's attachment was avowed, and his mistress must, if true to her own happiness, reward it. At least honour, delicacy, sisterly love, all forbade her to indulge a passion, which could only end in guilt or disappointment.

On returning to the letter, her father's sentiments confirmed her noble resolution. He praised her prudence; ought she to disgrace his judgment? He spoke of her as his dearest consolation; and should she add to his griefs or embarrassments? What a transport to be able to support an unfortunate but almost adored father! Could love, even innocent happy love, supply a more exalted bliss?

Deter-

Determined, with all the laudable diffidence of an ingenuous mind, not to trust her resolution to the chance of an hour, she resolved to write to her father, and to inform him of the acquiescence with his wishes. There are some secrets which scarcely admit of being disclosed even to ourselves. Louisa's was of this nature. Resolved to eradicate an attachment it would have been criminal to avow, she judged it unnecessary to mention to her father the reason which most forcibly determined her; since virtue, discretion, and self-command told her it would not long exist.

‘ TO MR. DUDLEY.

‘ Dear and Honoured Father,

‘ Have you from my earliest infancy to this moment ever given a stronger proof of your affection for me, than the letter I now hold to my throbbing heart? You bid me, Sir, be sincere; I have bathed it with tears of veneration, gratitude, and reluctance. The last was the least painful emotion.

‘ I acknow-

' I acknowledge no prior attachment, and
 ' I trust I shall be able to bestow my heart
 ' where your wishes point. At least, the
 ' gentleman whom your superior penetration
 ' is disposed to favour, may be sure of ac-
 ' quiring my esteem. Be pleased to inform
 ' Sir William Milton that I will endeavour
 ' to deserve his generous preference: our
 ' acquaintance has been so recent that he will
 ' not expect me to say more. To you, my
 ' father, I will own that the unbounded afflu-
 ' ence he possesses has to me no other charm,
 ' than that it will enable me to relieve
 ' every anxious care which oppresses your
 ' heart. You invite me to partake of your
 ' cottage. Oh, for a sanctuary safe from
 ' every misfortune in which I might inshrine
 ' you!

LOUISA DUDLEY.

The agitation of Miss Dudley's mind was
 too great to permit her to write with a steady
 hand. Mr. Dudley, upon receiving it, haf-
 tened to her apartment. "I have," said he,
 tenderly embracing her, "received a letter
 which

which does honour to your filial piety and virtue. The pleasure I received from it would have been unmixed, could I have forgotten that what gave transport to my heart, was perhaps the source of bitter pangs to yours."

"You have convinced my reason, Sir," replied Louisa; "and if I did not attempt to act according to its rules, I should deserve contempt rather than pity. But does Sir William know my answer? I trust he does not press an immediate interview."

"I have avoided Sir William," said Mr. Dudley, "and for the present shall. You have rather told me what you wish to do, than what you are able to perform. It is not necessary that he should be immediately accepted, but after he is, it is highly important that he should not be able to tax your conduct with levity or caprice. Recollect yourself, my child: the subject in debate respects your future happiness, yet it is not more important

portant to yourself than to me. If the pleas I have urged give you pain, forget them."

"Your tenderness," said Louisa, melting into tears, "is less pleasing, as it implies a want of that confidence in my strength of mind, which I wish to inspire. Have I, Sir, forfeited your esteem? I mean to be ingenuous; Sir William shall know my errors and defects. I will tell him at our first interview, that, perhaps I can never return his disinterested regard with warm attachment; but that he shall possess my duty, esteem, and gratitude. If this declaration satisfies him, I will be his."

"And shall I prepare him, my love," said Mr. Dudley, "by telling him that at the apprehension of that interview you trembled; turned pale, and eagerly caught hold of my hand? My dear child, you never appeared more deserving of my esteem than at this moment. But be not precipitate; if your resolution is well founded, it will be the same to-morrow morning. We shall, you
know,

know, have company to dinner; resume your composure, and judge of your lover's behaviour. Trivial circumstances sometimes prove a true index to the heart, and may his be worthy of yours!"

Mr. Dudley pressed his daughter's hand between his, and withdrew, rightly judging that she would be better enabled to tranquilize her mind by reflection, than by a further discussion of the painful subject.

CH A P. IX.

A conversation piece, concluded by a song.

THE benignant smile with which Miss Dudley performed the honours of her father's table this day, was not the satisfactory glow of a delighted heart, but the placid sweetness of a dignified and benevolent mind. Politeness and attention were so habitual to her, that it was impossible for any of the guests to complain of neglect, though her bosom was throbbing with sensations of the
most

most painful nature. Determined to give the pleasures she could not feel, she smothered her sighs with such care, that even Mr. Dudley's watchful eye could not discover her serenity to be only assumed; and he congratulated himself that the alliance which promised to support his tottering fortunes, would also confirm his Louisa's happiness.

The next interesting figure in the groupe was Mr. Pelham, but as he really was as much at ease as he appeared, his merit must rank below the mild cheerfulness of Miss Dudley. His lively sense and attentive good humour, while it seemed only solicitous to call forth the various talents of the company, enjoyed the reverberation of the pleasure which he excited. Every body went away satisfied, and persuaded that, next themselves, Mr. Pelham was the most amiable and best-informed person of the party. Swift observes, "that the person whom all agree to pronounce deserving of the second place, deserves in reality the first:" I shall not controvert this opinion. The

The fair Marianne was not so universally admired. After she had left her sister's dressing-room, to divert the sympathising pain she really felt, she had recourse to her studies. The novel selected for the morning was of the mournful cast, and after attending the heroine through four long volumes of sentimental misery, the ideas of soft distress were so familiarized to her mind, and so heightened by Louisa's sufferings and her own perplexities, that during the whole evening she appeared more like the weeping April than the smiling May.

Sir William Milton exhibited a different cast of character. On his entrance into the room, he cast an observing glance from under his bent brows, on the company, which, though it consisted of all the *genteel* people of Danbury, he considered to be utterly beneath his notice. Wrapping himself, therefore, in his own conscious importance, he sat silently enjoying the superiority he felt. At intervals he threw his eyes upon Louisa,
not

not to see how much she surpassed the objects around her, but to wonder why she would take pains to render herself agreeable to *such* people.

I do not hold forth this conduct as prudent. Few people are so stupid as not to perceive when they are despised, and fewer yet have sufficient servility to submit to contempt. Those who appear to do so are guided by interested motives, and it would lower the hauteur of arrogance to reflect, that the inferiors on whom they exercise their ill humour, expect to be repaid for their forbearance. Wealth and rank have many natural advantages; mankind only asks permission to applaud and to admire them. A nod from his Grace, a bow from my Lord, or a smile from the Squire, are a sort of cheque drawn upon our own vanity, which we punctually discharge with a large quantity of commendation. All my neighbours went determined to like the Nabob; yet even Captain Target, though he had resolved to
visit

visit him at Milton-hall, returned without being in raptures. To own the truth, every body was too much piqued, to confess their own peculiar disappointment, but very kindly pitied other people's; and the unamiable description of Sir William's haughty reserve concluded with, "To be sure *I* should not say so, for he was very civil to me, but quite rude to Mr. and Mrs. such-a-one."

No sooner had the party broken up, than Marianne began to pity Louisa; "I trembled for you, my love, the whole day," said she. "How embarrassing! to be forced to entertain strangers, while your heart was torn with such cruel apprehensions."

"I could have wished," replied Louisa, smiling, "that you had been a little better able to assist me. I was concerned to see you so out of spirits."

"And did you observe it? O you are just such a kind attentive friend as my dear Grandmamma was! But sympathy,
the

the boast of women, has no place in the bosom of men. You must now acknowledge that I am right. If Mr. Pelham loved me, he never could have been so cheerful and volatile while I was so depressed. Sir William's behaviour was strikingly different; he hung upon your looks with the air of a man, who only lived in your presence. His silence too and dejected air were highly expressive of the anxious unaccepted lover. Indeed, Louisa, you will rule every movement of his soul."

"I had rather be less important to him, or else discover something more amiable in his manners," returned Louisa. "His fixed attention disconcerted me, but perhaps time may render him less alarming. However, as you are become the panegyrist of my admirer, let me speak in favour of yours."

"Giddy insensible creature," replied Marianne.

"How," cried Louisa, "can you call him insensible, who took this morning, unknown

to any one, a walk of five miles to relieve a worthy family in distress? He is cheerful and agreeably animated indeed, but did you ever see his mirth offend the laws of decorum, politeness, or humanity? With what respect does he speak of serious and sacred subjects? His behaviour to Mr. Medium to-day is in point. How generously did he rescue that diffident man from the frothy jests of Captain Target? What consequence did he give him in the eye of every one present, by the attentions he himself paid? I trust I should not have been negligent, but it would have been impossible for me to have overlooked the dignity of the clerical character, while such a Mentor was present. How delicately did he divert from Miss Cardamum the common-place raillery upon old maids, at the instant too that Mr. Alfop was preparing a laugh at the Captain's jokes? Every one was delighted to see the man of wit look infinitely more ridiculous, than the poor persecuted spinster."

"My

"My heart was not sufficiently at ease to observe them," answered Marianne, half smiling. "But I am rejoiced to see you could. It certainly is a good omen for Sir William."

"I do not doubt," returned Louisa, recollecting herself, "but that I shall soon be able to discover many latent good qualities in *him*; and then my present reluctance to his addresses will disappear."

"Not if you are like me," sighed Marianne, "Mine increase every hour."

"Then, for Heaven's sake, why not immediately refuse Mr. Pelham?"

"Can you, who set me such a pattern of heroism, ask, or need I answer? Filial piety forbids."

"You certainly mistake my father," returned Louisa; "he leaves you absolutely free: he does not even influence you by giving his opinion."

"And can you imagine me ignorant what that opinion is?" said Marianne. "His

eyes have told it me, every commendation he utters convinces me of his wishes, and to those wishes I devote myself a sacrifice. I might even ask you, why he should be so solicitous to see you married, and yet indifferent how I am disposed of?"

Louisa, who recollected that her father did not wish to depress her sister's mind, by discovering the misfortunes which threatened him, knew not how to reply. Marianne, who misconstrued her embarrassment, passionately exclaimed, "Speak, your silence is more distracting than certainty. If there be any reason, it must be that I have less of his affections, and if so, lost, undone Marianne!" "You yield to a causeless alarm," returned Louisa. "Do, my dear girl, endeavour to conquer these keen sensibilities. Be assured you have a full share of my father's heart. Let me persuade you to entrust to him all your troubles. His tenderness will relieve, and his discretion will direct you. He has all the delicacy you can wish

with for in a confident; he will encourage you by his condescension: and support you by his firmness. When you have opened your heart to him, you will no longer doubt his lively affection. Tell me, Marianne, will you take courage? Shall I prepare him for the interview?"

After a little hesitation Marianne consented, and retired to consider what her troubles and sorrows really were.

In the morning Miss Dudley met her father in the library. Her smiling aspect induced him to tell her, that, encouraged by the unconstrained ease of her behaviour yesterday, he had acquainted Sir William Milton with her determination; which he was the more solicitous to do, as he perceived the young Baronet hurt at being kept in suspense. He concluded with saying, that the favour of an immediate introduction had been requested. Louisa had sufficient presence of mind to avoid trembling, and again catching hold of her father's arm, she walked

to the window, and in a few moments said she would retire to her dressing-room after breakfast, and would then see Sir William.

She now recollected her sister's request, and stated, as well as she was able, the irresolution and terror under which Marianne laboured. Mr. Dudley, who had long thought his younger daughter one of the peculiar favourites of fortune, was astonished to find that she also was suffering under the "penalty of Adam." He readily promised his assistance, but had Louisa been in a livelier humour, it is possible they might have mutually laughed at the peculiar nature of the fair mourner's embarrassment.

I formerly gave a reason why I avoided dwelling upon love scenes; and indeed that which passed between Miss Dudley and Sir William was not very well calculated to do credit to the describer. The gentleman was consequential, the lady was confused. The swain, at the moment he declared his high sense of his mistress's excellencies, took care
to

to place his own advantages in a striking point of view ; and the nymph, when he took leave, could not help wishing that he might appear to greater advantage at his next interview.

Considering it wrong in her present situation to indulge reflections to his disadvantage, Miss Dudley strove to banish them, by adopting the following stanzas to her harpsichord :

S O N G.

I.

Th' Idalian boy with frolick mien,
And Cytherea, changeful Queen,
To Hymen's shrine advance ;
Hope beckons to her fairy band,
With these the Graces, hand in hand,
Unite in festal dance.

II.

Pleasure attunes her silver shell,
Of ever during joys to tell,
Which mutual love supplies ;
And sanguine youth, enwreath'd with flowers,
Transported views the white-rob'd hours,
That bright in vision rise.

III.

But not for me the joyful train
 Bids Pleasure sound that raptur'd strain,
 For me no Graces play ;
 Th' Idalian boy bends not his bow,
 Nor does the torch of Hymen glow
 On me with gladsome ray.

IV.

Be firm, my heart, the conflict dare,
 A father's grief, a father's care,
 Thy wish'd assent beguiles ;
 And, powerful Virtue ! be thou nigh,
 Chase the fond dew-drop from my eye,
 And dress my face in smiles.

V.

Nor let me with desponding gloom
 Confine my prospects to the tomb,
 Or pine with mortal care ;
 When conscience whispers mental peace,
 Shall not the war of passion cease ?
 To guilt belongs despair.

CHAP. X.

*Humbly dedicated to the improvement of all
 fair Quixotes in heroism.*

LEST the affection of my readers
 should be wholly engrossed by the calm dig-
 nity

nity with which Louisa reconciled her mind to whatever was unpleasant in her situation, I shall dedicate this chapter to Marianne, who was now immersed in a sea of troubles.

She so deeply pondered on the probable consequences of the interview with her father, that her mind was rendered too weak to derive any benefit from it. She alternately threw herself upon the sofa, and reclined upon the bosom of her confidential maid Patty. She now feared she should never support herself in the expected conversation, and then again fortified her resolution with hartshorn.

Mr. Dudley, at his first entrance into her dressing-room, perceived his daughter's terrors, and endeavoured to divert them. He praised the docility of a bull-finch, which, at her bidding, chaunted the tune of "Ma chere amie." He next commended the elegant fancy, with which she had decorated Miss Milton's portrait, by connecting it to her own by a broad blue ribband, on which

the words, "The bond of friendship," were embroidered in silver foil. By thus leading her attention from the subject, he enabled her to recover herself; and in a little time she found courage to tell him, that she wished to have his opinion whether it would be improper for her to dismiss Mr. Pelham.

Of that, Mr. Dudley answered, she must be the best judge, as she knew what kind of encouragement she had given him.

"None, upon my word," she replied, "except permitting his visits."

"The dismissal of a lover who has received only that mark of attention," resumed Mr. Dudley, "is rather an embarrassing affair; since it proves that the person you thought worthy, when at a distance, is not so eligible upon a nearer view. Will you, my dear, state your objections to Mr. Pelham?"

Marianne began her customary complaints. "Their sentiments did not coincide, their tastes were materially different, there was no similitude of soul, nothing to form that strong tie of sympathy which you know," said she,
 "must

"must exist, or else there can be no certain expectation of felicity."

"Perhaps, my love," replied Mr. Dudley, "you will alter your opinion when you have heard what I am going to tell you. I have not entirely depended upon Mr. Pelham's very prepossessing countenance, nor the amiable urbanity of his manners, in forming a favourable opinion of his intrinsic worth. I have taken the liberty Lady Milton proposed, and have made repeated inquiries respecting his character. The result is highly satisfactory. I am told that his morals are unexceptionable, and that his reputation for probity and goodness stands very high. He is respectfully treated by his superiors; a proof that he is free from the contemptible meanness of fawning servility. His equals esteem him, and he is idolized by his dependents; I should therefore think his benevolence and agreeable temper unquestionable. In fine, I am told that he is a kind master, an indulgent landlord, an obliging neighbour, and a steady active friend."

“ Yet, Sir,” said Marianne, “ you are only describing what I should call a good sort of person. These are merely *common* virtues. How detestable would he be if destitute of them.”

“ Take care, Marianne, how you treat a good sort of man, as you term him, with contempt, or despise the person who conscientiously performs the ordinary duties of life. Providence has ascertained their value by their hourly recurrence. A man's family is the theatre wherein he can exercise every laudable quality. If he fail to practise them daily at home, he will never perform them gracefully before the eye of the world. Believe me, my child, the *common* virtues, as you stile them, are the most essential parts of the human character. They do not indeed dazzle our senses ; but they gladden our hearts by a mild uniform lustre. To your question, what Mr. Pelham would be, if destitute of them, I will answer, what many men are, who impose upon the world as the possessors of superior merit ;

merit ; and who peculiarly attract the attention of the superficial part of your sex."

"Do not speak with severity, my dear Sir," said Marianne, her eyes swimming with tears. "Your voice and look intimidate me."

"My voice and look then belie my heart," rejoined her father, "which at this moment overflows in tenderness for you. Proceed, my love ; have you any thing else to state ?"

"Many things, my dearest father. Yet turn aside your face. Spare my blushes. He is not, indeed he is not, the tender, respectful, sympathizing lover, which my heart tells me is necessary for my future repose. He does not love me, at least not with that ardent affection, that deference, that assiduous timidity--But you smile, Sir."

"I did, my dear, to see by what a false romantick standard you estimate your lover's worth. Have you observed so little of real life as not to perceive, that the kind of address you talk of, is chiefly practised by the designing part of mankind, upon the woman
whose

whose person or fortune is the object of their desire? You must know that marriage divests you of all this assumed consequence. Law and custom leave the husband master of his own actions, and in a certain degree arbiter of his wife's. Whether your lover was a sentimental sniveller, or an artful designer, the mock majesty with which you were invested could not continue in the married state. The romantick part of love quickly evaporates, and the soonest with him who has been the most visionary in his expectations. Think yourself happy if the kneeling slave does not change into the Tyrant, and compel you, in your turn, to endure without complaint, the whimsical indifference of caprice, or the sudden burst of petulance. Do not let my long lecture tire you; but I must observe that Mr. Pelham's character as a man, is of much greater consequence to your future peace, than his behaviour as a lover. The latter distinction will soon be laid aside, on the former you must depend
through

through life; and he who practises the other relative duties, will seldom act wrong in this more intimate and interesting connexion."

"But, Sir," said Marianne, "even in your circumscribed and limited idea of love, some portion of it is necessary. Three years ago I passed the summer with Mr. Pelham at Lady Milton's; if I *really* made an impression upon his heart, would he have concealed his passion till my Grand-mamma's death had ascertained my fortune? I then thought he appeared most attentive to Miss Milton."

"If you, Marianne, are serious in this objection, your age affords the best answer. The character of a girl at sixteen is not sufficiently determined, to allow a prudent man to look forward to a permanent connexion. Nature has been liberal to your person, and I perceive you are fond of making impressions at first sight; yet would you not wish your lover to say with Juba,

" 'Tis not a set of features, or complexion,

"The tincture of the skin, that I admire;

"The virtuous Marcia towers above her sex?"

Till

Till you are certain that the discovery of similar perfection in your character, has not secured to you Mr. Pelham's affection, I should advise you not to think him mercenary. Besides, recollect he was then a minor, consequently he could not with propriety think of marriage; and an attempt to engage you in the many inconveniencies of a long entanglement, however consistent with the narrow views of self-indulgence, has little of the generosity inseparable from my idea of true love."

Marianne asked, with some degree of eagerness, whether true love could discover any faults in the object of its affections?

Mr. Dudley was of opinion that it could, as well as true friendship, for as the object of either of those passions was a fallible being, it was a proof that we indulged them to a blameable excess, when they precluded us from the exercise of reason. "I recollect," continued he, "the circumstance to which I dare

I dare say you allude, and will only tell you, that if you do not renounce your romantick notions before you have been a wife a twelve-month, I shall think very *highly* indeed of your husband's politeness, or very *meanly* of the sincerity of his attachment to you."

"I shall never be converted, Sir," replied Marianne with a faint smile. "The picture you have drawn of a married life, has determined me never to enter into it. My heart tells me that if my husband were to omit any of those thousand delicate attentions, those pleasing assiduities that won me to be his, despair and death must be the consequence."

"If you speak seriously, my dear child, I shall advise you by all means to adhere to your resolution. Your motives for rejecting what I think a most eligible offer, prove that you have cherished instead of suppressed those painful sensibilities, to which your
sex

sex owes its severest miseries ; are you, my love, who tremble at a breeze, fit to encounter the storms of life ? If you feel yourself unable to support a casual unkindness, in which perhaps the heart has no share, or a casual error from which the mind, on recollection, revolted, endeavour to contract your sphere of action, and to make yourself happy with fewer blessings, as you cannot encounter their attendant sorrows. Marriage, like all other sublunary connexions, mixes the bitter with the sweet. Mutual confidence and esteem compose the latter, and mutual forbearance must be exerted to palliate the former. The similitude of soul, of taste, and of sentiment, which you talk of, is not necessary. The strong tie of sympathy often cannot exist ; and the delicate attentions and pleasing assiduities of the lover, so rarely appear in the husband, that if these circumstances *still* seem essential to your peace, do not commit your happiness

ness to the slender chance of finding a human phoenix, but confine your sensibility to the calmer enjoyments of friendship. A mistake *there* will neither be so irretrievable, nor so excruciating."

Marianne only answered with a deep sigh, and Mr. Dudley, after conjuring her to give the whole argument a fair discussion, withdrew.

CHAP. XI.

A specimen of an Abigail's eloquence. Marianne appears in various points of view.

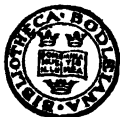
IMMEDIATELY after Mr. Dudley was gone, Mrs. Patty entered the dressing-room. From the circumstance of having attended her young lady from her infancy, she imagined herself intitled to give her opinion upon every occurrence, and by virtue of listening had made herself mistress of some part of the foregoing conversation. She was particularly shocked at the cruel advice given against matrimony; nor could she
have

have endured greater consternation, had her lady's last present been spoil'd at the dyer's, or had any one assured her that the butler had sent a billet-doux to the housekeeper. Those, who consider how advantageous a young lady's love affairs are to an Abigail, the certainty of possessing all the old wardrobe, when the fair bride puts on her nuptial paraphernalia, and the possibility of further presents; must have hearts of adamant, if they do not excuse Mrs. Patty's passion, and forgive her, though she should be a little illiberal to Mr. Dudley.

"Oh, Patty," exclaimed Marianne, "I am not equal to the troubles I must undergo. I am weary of life."

"A great deal too good for the people you are *confarned* with, Madam," replied Patty. "Oh no, I am a poor helpless, weak, inconsistent, creature."

"But if I were you, Madam, I would not be *so* long." Mr. Frank tells me as how his master is quite resolved about it, and means
to



to put the question this very time; and I know *I* should not *argufy* long. I never knew no good come of *shilly shally* doings, I'd have him at once."

"I never will," said Marianne, "nor any one else. I detest the sex. My father has inspired me with an abhorrence of all men."

"Never did I hear of any thing so barbarous," cried the indignant Patty. "I am sure you never should have seen him this morning, if I had thought what he was going to say. Just as if it was not natural to be married, and as if people then could not be happy if they like. I am sure it is their own faults if they *arn't*. Hate all men, indeed! why the poor young gentleman will go mad. Pray, Ma'am, don't use such sad words any more, for you frighten me to death. But I know what our old gentleman would be at, I can see as well as another."

Marianne, who sat deeply musing upon what her father had urged, did not hear one word of Patty's eloquence; but passionately exclaimed,

exclaimed, "O my Grandmamma, if your fatal partiality had never distinguished your unhappy child, I should have had no cause to doubt the sincerity of my lover's attachment. Fortune, thou idol of mercenary souls, I detest thy pageant incumbrance!"

Mrs. Patty, who thought money a very good thing, and was seldom withheld from answering by not clearly comprehending her lady's meaning, readily replied, "Why, certainly, Ma'am, when people love one another, there is no need for money to make them happy, and to be sure, young Mr. Pelham is very rich, and you may not like to keep much company. But then cannot you live quite retired, and do a great deal of good, and be *vastly* generous to every body about you."

"I repeat that I hate him, that I am determined against him," exclaimed Marianne.

Patty, who thought it impossible her mistress should, of her own accord, hate such a good-humoured looking gentleman, was out of all patience with Mr. Dudley;
to

to whom she supposed this determination was owing, and resolved to relieve herself from the burden of the secret, which she had faithfully concealed *three* hours. "Shame upon them," said she, "for a parcel of crafty folks, and Heaven forgive me for speaking rash, but I can tell why he does this. Why, Ma'am, I did not mean you should know any thing about it, and to be sure I promised Thomas not to say a word, but it is very true for all that. Your Papa has outrun the constable I find, and as sure as you are alive wants you never to marry, that you may take care of him, and *the* Miss Louisa he is so fond of. Thomas told me this very morning that things were in a sad poor way. His master gets no sleep, but is walking about his room, or else writing, and looking over accounts. And he found a bit of an old letter, so he is sure there will be a crash soon. But I know if I were you, I never would be made a tool of, and all to please a favourite sister."

As

As wise people often defeat their aims by too great caution, cunning also frequently overshoots the mark by too much craft. Patty's speech, instead of awakening the angry malevolent passions in the bosom of her gentle mistress, as she designed it should, inspired the kindest sorrow for her unfortunate father; mingled with a regret too tender to be called envy, that his preference for Louisa was so visible. Her heart was really excellent, and she resolved not meanly to supplant, but heroically to emulate her sister. Miss Dudley's motive for encouraging Sir William was now apparent, and stimulated by her example, Marianne formed the resolution of never marrying, while her father's circumstances continued perplexed, but to dedicate the fortune she had just quarrelled with to his support.

The heart is never so easy as when sustained by conscious rectitude, and though the romantick turn of this young lady's mind, taught her to overlook little duties, it impetuously urged her to perform

form high acts of virtue. To increase the merit of the sacrifice, she resolved to conceal the motive, and after severely chiding Patty for her impertinent invectives, (which she, with the true adroitness of her profession, excused by exuberant declarations of regard for her dearest lady,) dispatched her to beg a second interview with Mr. Dudley.

She met him with a smile, which beaming through her tears, bespoke the triumph of fortitude in a feeling heart, and told him, she had weighed his arguments, and felt determined against marriage.

Mr. Dudley begged her to form no resolutions which might restrain her judgment respecting a future connection. A lover might appear better adapted to her taste; but as Mr. Pelham had not sufficient influence to induce her to change the single state, his dismissal became unavoidable.

Marianne told her father her motives would ever hold in force: "You will,"

said she, "be left without a companion when Louisa marries Sir William. Allow me to fill *her* place in your affections, and to dedicate my life to you."

"You will ever preserve your *own* place," said Mr. Dudley, clasping her to his bosom, "and I trust my beloved girls will only leave me to secure to themselves more tender and affectionate friends, whose protection will continue when mine is terminated by the law of nature. Time, my Marianne, will, I hope, diminish that dangerous susceptibility which wars against your peace; and then, like your sister, you will increase my happiness, by giving me a son worthy of my tenderest affection, if deserving of you."

Marianne's transport was unbounded. Filial piety taught her to glory in the praise of such a father, while conscience increased her joy, by suggesting the honest pride of having deserved it. The only task remaining, was to dismiss Mr. Pelham politely, and Mr. Dudley reluctantly undertook the painful office.

That

That gentleman's mind was indeed prepared in some degree for this mortification. He perceived the little progress he had made in his charmer's heart; and as his attachment rather increased than declined, he felt the severest concern. Desirous of securing a woman, interesting even in her eccentricities, he would willingly have framed his addresses to her taste; but as it is very difficult for a man of honour to adopt the character which he despises, or to speak a language foreign to his heart, his unfortunate attempts at sighing Strephon were so remarkably unsuccessful, that they only gave the idea of an ironical caricature; and convinced Marianne that he rather designed to ridicule than to flatter her opinion. But, though equally unhappy in his natural and assumed character, he still kept lingering near her, fascinated by the hope which love supplied, that time might work some change in his fortune. A hope which the favourable regard of Mr. and Miss Dudley certainly strengthened.

The regret he felt at being deserted by this poor support, was too severe to be softened by the warm expressions of esteem with which Mr. Dudley qualified his daughter's refusal. He repeatedly inquired if her determinations were positively fixed; if entreaties might not prevail upon her at least to postpone his rejection; at length recollecting himself, and fortifying his mind by the proud (or shall I say by the prudent) consideration that marriage could promise little happiness, unless founded on the basis of *mutual* regard, he determined to submit to his fate. At taking leave of Stannadine he impressed every one with grief for his departure, except the person whose approbation he had been most solicitous to obtain.

CHAP. XII.

Extremely useful to the author, giving her an opportunity of filling her book, contrasting her characters, and displaying great critical acumen.

THE mythological fable of the combat between Hercules and Antæus, may allude to the pertinacity with which the human mind reverts to its first designs. When our plans are thwarted and disconcerted, the moment of apparent defeat is that in which we most zealously form the project of a fresh attack. My classical readers will thank me for this allusion, if it be only applied to a waiting-maid.

In short, the redoubtable Patty, though one offer of marriage was absolutely negatived, was still resolved to defeat her master's supposed design, of fortuning Miss Dudley with her lady's property : and thinking numerous lovers must at least unsettle her intention of living in "blessed singleness," she

began to debate upon the ways and means of raising her an army of admirers.

The world is ever so generously inclined to rescue a rich beauty from the vile duration in which she is kept by an avaricious, tyrannical, or capricious father, that Patty had only to tell her poor mistress's hard fate, in order to succeed. Even Danbury was not without somewhat of the chivalrous spirit, and two Knights-errant issued forth to rescue the captive Damsel. I choose to speak according to the *real* intentions of the parties, for ostensibly it was only one Knight, and an attendant Esquire.

Captain Target encouraged Mr. Alfop to make proposals, promising to second him with all the powers of his address and eloquence; which, to say truth, he meant to employ to his own advantage if occasion offered. Let those who censure this as a breach of friendship, consider the fascination of youth, wealth, and beauty, and they will, at least, allow that the Captain did not act an *uncommon* part.

As

As it was very material to the success of their projects, that Mr. Dudley should not be apprized of them, reserve in his presence became indispensibly necessary; and Mr. Alsop depending upon his friend for explanation, was not sufficiently pointed in his devoirs to Marianne, to enable her to discover whether the frequency of these gentlemen's visits was owing to the attraction of her own charms, or the good arrangement of her father's table. There was something so unique in them both, that without any share of coquetry it was allowable to indulge a laugh at their expense; and Louisa often diverted her mind from the gloom of her own prospects, by rallying her sister upon her conquest, not only of young meum and tuum, but also of the veteran son of Mars. Except the amusement which they afforded the ladies, their presence added little to the pleasures of Stannadine. To a man like Mr. Dudley, possessed of resources in his own

mind, what is commonly called a good neighbour is rather a formidable character; and Sir William Milton, now almost an inmate in the family, never spent an hour with our Danbury beaux, without discovering some new quality to excite contempt. Neither of *my* friends were skilful in making discoveries of the mortifying kind; Mr. Alsop knew no other criterion by which to discover dislike, than the blunt expression of "Sir, I do not want your company," and the Captain was persuaded that Mr. Dudley enjoyed his long military details, and that his happy, easy, unencumbered, attentive manner had quite conquered the Baronet's reserve; because he often condescended to laugh at his jests; but Captain Target was not blessed with the clearest penetration.

Conversation is a delicacy of that peculiar nature, that to preserve all its agreeable pungency, many uncommon ingredients are necessary. Mr. Dudley often felt distressed how to amuse his guests, and one evening,
to

to prevent the rising yawn, without having recourse to the sameness of cards, he proposed the perusal of a Legendary Tale, which had afforded him entertainment a few days before. Marianne seconded the motion, declaring herself an enthusiastick admirer of poetry. Her echo Alsop repeated her words, with the addition that he loved it so much, that he always used to read the pretty things in the papers to his papa and his aunt Peggy; and the Captain enjoyed tales and stories to his heart. It was at first proposed that Louisa should be orator, but she, with graceful diffidence, desired leave to propose an abler substitute, and delivered the manuscript to Sir William, with a smile which almost divested his countenance of its usual austerity.

As my narrative is not now at a very interesting period, I am inclined to hope my critical readers will allow me the Gossip's privilege of digression. I will promise them, that my poetical episode shall be as condu-

cive to *forward* my main plot, as secondary characters and flowery illustrations are, in the most approved productions of my cotemporaries. Besides the usual advantage of filling my volumes, those, who choose to skip over adventitious matter, will at one glance know where to begin again. The moral may recommend it to the few, who still love to see nobility clad in the respectable robe of virtue ; and eminent rank described in unison with dignified sentiments and generous actions.

RODOLPHO, EARL OF NORFOLK;

A

LEGENDARY TALE.

Wisdom and Fortune combating together,
If that the former do but what it can,
No chance can shake it.

SHAKSPEARE.

PART I.

T WAS at the hour when evening's pall
Hangs lightly on the vale,
The songsters of the grove were mute,
Hush'd was each ruder gale:

The weary swain had sought the path
Which toward the hamlet goes,
To take his hard-earn'd frugal meal,
And snatch his short repose:

When by the tufted oaks that throw
Long shadows o'er the mead,
The brave ill-fated Edgar led
His much o'er-wearied steed.

Bruis'd was his buckler, deeply bruis'd
The cuirass on his breast;
And many a hostile blow had fall'n
Upon his batter'd crest.

Affliction o'er his graceful form
A soft attraction threw,
As damask roses seem more sweet
When wash'd by morning dew.

As sad he mus'd on pleasures past:
On crosses that annoy,
And every bitter ill that taints
The cup of human joy;

Sudden a tumult in the wood
His startled ear alarms,
The shriek of terror and surprise,
The clang of hostile arms.

Nor did the generous Edgar doubt
His succour to bestow,
His heart, tho' full of sharp distress,
Still felt another's woe.

Now, near the spot, he view'd a scene
Which might the brave affright,
Six ruffians join'd in murderous league
Against one gallant Knight:

That Knight with inbred courage warm'd
Full on th'affailants bore;
A faithful servant at his feet
Lay bath'd in mortal gore.

Resistless

Resistless as the lightning's flash,
 His faulchion Edgar drew ;
 Nor does the dreaded bolt of Heaven
 Descend with aim more true.

Two quickly fell ; the stranger Knight
 Th' unhop'd-for succour blest ;
 New vigour nerv'd his sinewy arm,
 And fortify'd his breast.

Sharp was the conflict ! dire the scene !
 But Heaven is virtue's guard ;
 By arduous conflict proves its worth
 To justify reward.

All lifeless fell ; the rescu'd Knight
 Survey'd them on the ground ;
 And knew them well, an outlaw'd band
 For desp'rate deeds renown'd.

And now he snatch'd brave Edgar's hand
 With frank and courteous mien ;
 " How dear," he cried, " I prize my life,
 Hereafter shall be seen.

No low-born peasant hast thou sav'd,
 No base unthankful churl ;
 Rodolpho is my name, a Knight,
 And now of Norfolk, Earl.

But

120 A GOSSIP'S STORY.

But let us to my castle haste,
In yonder vale it lies;
And lo, to speed our tardy steps,
Night's deeper shades arise."

They left the wood-crown'd hills, and swift
The winding vale explor'd;
And here a train with lighted brands
Came forth to meet their lord.

Their vestures of rich cloth of gold
Shone glittering in the light,
And soon the castle's spacious walls
Burst full on Edgar's sight.

The ample moat, the lofty spires,
Each work of Gothick art,
Proclaim'd at once the master's wealth,
And spoke his liberal heart.

Observant of his honour'd will,
The servants crowded round,
And Edgar saw the stately board
With tasteful viands crown'd.

Rodolpho took a golden bowl,
Mantling with cordial wine,
And graceful to his gallant guest
Consign'd the draught divine.

Then

A GOSSIP'S STORY. 121

Then to his train, " Whilst we with food
Our wasted strength restore,
Go, bid the minstrel's sweet-ton'd harp
Some soothing ditty pour."

The bard obey'd; love's woes he sang,
And then that descant clear,
Whose theme, the wars of ancient days,
Enchants the chieftain's ear.

But as the wat'ry halo veils
The splendor of the moon,
So look'd Sir Edgar's tearful eyes,
Pain'd at the martial tune.

Rodolpho stopp'd the thrilling song,
Then thus his train address'd,
" That yet I live to thank your care,
Be this brave hero blest.

Had not his arm from robbers fell
A sure defence supply'd,
I now had lain a lifeless corse
By faithful Osbert's side."

He ceas'd; and through the spacious hall
The burst of transport reign'd,
Which, plainer far than studied speech,
Great Norfolk's worth explain'd.

On

On Edgar each the ardent eye
Of grateful blessing threw ;
It spoke the feelings of their hearts,
It spoke their virtues too.

The tumult ceas'd : now all retir'd,
Save Norfolk and his guest ;
Again the Earl grasp'd Edgar's hand,
And tremulous address'd :

“ Fortune around my favour'd head
Has all her gifts diffus'd,
Nor yet has Love, to bless my life,
Her sweeter hopes refus'd.

My father from the Norman shore
With Royal William came ;
He shar'd the dangers of his lord,
He shar'd alike his fame.

Proportion'd to his soldier's worth,
The King rewards bestow'd ;
And, since my father's death, to me
Hath Royal bounty flow'd.

His honour'd patronage I boast,
His confidence possess ;
I use my pow'r to punish wrong,
To mitigate distress.

Thou

Thou brave preserver of my life,
Or let me call thee friend,
My tongue would speak my heart's warm wish,
But fears it may offend.

In ev'ry gesture, ev'ry look,
Thy lofty soul I trace;
The dignity of conscious worth
Informs thy meaning face.

Yet I have mark'd thy frequent sighs
Which, tho' in part suppress'd,
Awake a fear that fortune's wrongs
Have oft thy soul distress'd.

Say then, in all the ample store,
The power, the wealth I bear,
Is there a blessing thou wouldst deign,
At my request, to share?

Nor fear to ask; Rodolpho's life
Is not of value base;
Some ample boon, some princely gift,
Should its preserver grace."

He paus'd; o'er Edgar's glowing face
A deep suffusion pass'd;
And now his eye was rais'd to Heaven,
And now on Norfolk cast.

"Oh

124 A GOSSIP'S STORY.

"Oh soul of honour!" he exclaim'd,

"Too high the chance you rate;

Which haply led me to behold

Thy late disastrous state.

For he who had a moment paus'd,

Yet seen th' unequal strife,

Must have a heart as base as those

Who fought thy sacred life.

Great Earl! as at thy festal board

Observant I have sat,

And seen thy menials with delight

Thy honour'd mandate wait:

My soul hath mus'd on all the wrongs

I unregarded met,

From those who, tho' they share thy rank,

Its duties still forget.

If to a poor man's simple tale

Thou canst indeed attend,

And to a lost and friendless wretch

Thy favouring arm extend;

Know then, that Edgar is my name,

And tho' of humble birth,

I boast a parentage renown'd

For uncorrupted worth.

My

My father, whose ingenuous mind
 Confess'd fair glory's charms,
 Inspir'd his dear and only son
 With love of arts and arms.

Fair was the promise of my youth,
 Beyond my rank or years ;
 In studious lore, in manly sports,
 I rose above my peers.

Impassion'd memory with delight
 Yet recollects the days,
 When all was pleasure, all was hope,
 Encouragement, and praise.

Destructive to this scene of joy,
 Love wak'd its fatal flame ;
 Rob'd in an angel's smiling form
 The dear delusion came.

Thou say'st, Rodolpho, thou hast lov'd,
 Thou wilt not then disdain
 To hear me, tho' from grief diffuse,
 My tale of woe explain :

A Saxon lord, whose lofty tow'rs
 O'erlook'd the vale we plow'd,
 To grace his daughter's natal day,
 Conven'd a festal crowd.

The

128 A GOSSIP'S STORY.

The martial sports, the conqueror's prize,
My swelling heart inflam'd ;
I went, and victor in the joust,
The promis'd honour claim'd.

I follow'd with exulting step
The vassals of the lord,
To where the mistress of the feast
Bestow'd the wish'd reward.

High on a rustick throne she sat,
With woodland lilies crown'd,
Her simple vest of virgin white
A cord of silver bound.

O'er her fair neck, whose snowy hue
Her garland did upbraid, -
Half falling from a silken net
Her nut-brown tresses stray'd.

She turn'd on me her radiant eyes,
Bright as the star of love ;
She smil'd ; so sweetly breaks the morn
In yon blue vault above.

But each fine feature to describe,
Demands superiour art ;
Suffice it, their remembrance lives,
Deep graven in my heart.

A GOSSIP'S STORY. 127

In tones, harmonious as the spheres,
My wish'd success she hail'd :
I should have answer'd, but at once
The power of language fail'd.

Kneeling I took the proffer'd prize,
In humble awe I gaz'd ;
A courtly victor would have spoke,
A colder lover prais'd.

Blushing she sought the festal hall,
There 'mid the virgin choir,
Obedient to her father's will,
She chaunted to her lyre.

The hopes of virtue were her theme,
Its perils, and its praise ;
Her heavenly looks might speak herself,
The subject of her lays.

O blest transcendently ! she cry'd,
And worthy to be blest,
Are all who, through the maze of life,
Keep virtue's pure behest.

Hard is the task, but toil and pain
Invigorates the mind,
Which, sinking on the couch of sloth,
Feels all its pow'rs confin'd.

Heaven

128 A GOSSIP'S STORY.

Heaven ne'er meant that man with ease
His wishes should obtain,
He must from labour's strenuous grasp
The palm of triumph gain.

Oh gen'rous youth ! if e'er thy heart
To glory dares aspire,
Let active merit's guiding ray
Direct the great desire.

By virtue, to the happy few
Who love her laws, is giv'n
Heartfelt tranquillity on earth,
And happiness in heav'n.

She ceas'd ! the numbers on my soul
New energy bestow'd ;
At once love wak'd its thrilling flame,
And emulation glow'd.

I felt the buoyant gale of hope
A rising fervour breathe ;
Vast was her worth, but sanguine love
Can miracles achieve.

Arms seem'd the nearest path to fame ;
I rous'd my rustick bands,
And rescu'd from an outlaw'd chief
Her father's richest lands.

I con-

I conquer'd, but with generous pride
All retribution wav'd;

I only fought my charmer's smile,
And scorn'd the lands I fav'd.

But soon her father's piercing ken
My latent love descry'd;
Still will the conscious eye disclose
Those truths the heart would hide.

Musing on every favouring hope
Her gentle smile convey'd,
As pensively one day I fate
Beneath a poplar's shade,

Her father came; Dar'ft thou, he cry'd,
Of rustick birth, aspire
To gain a beauteous lady's love,
Who calls a Baron fire?

Prefume not on the little fame
Thy sword by chance hath won,
Far nobler deeds, far ampler praise,
Must grace my future son.

But to disguise thy daring love,
No mean denials seek;
E'en now it flashes in thy eyes,
And blushes on thy cheek.

My

130 A GOSSIP'S STORY.

My vengeance, yes, my vengeance, boy,
Can arrogance restrain ;
Dare not beyond to-morrow's fun
Abide in my domain.

He ceas'd—I trembled ; 'twas not fear,
A glow of honest shame ;
A painful consciousness of worth,
Which yet I scorn'd to name.

My ready hand had grasp'd my sword,
But love the purpose stay'd ;
It was the father of my fair,
I sheath'd the half drawn blade.

Yes, at thy bidding I will go,
From England I will fly ;
Thou hast insulted me ; 'tis well
I frame no fierce reply.

Hereafter thou perchance may'st hear
Of my success in arms ;
My country's foes shall know how well
I prize thy daughter's charms.

I turn'd—the glow of injur'd pride
Suppress'd each mournful thought ;
I flew not to my father's arms,
But Robert's banners fought.

Exulting,

Exulting, on my arm the cross

Of Palestine I bound ;

Nor doubted quickly to return,

With martial honours crown'd.

How well I fought, let envious spleen,

Let calumny proclaim ;

My native courage caught from love

Enthusiastick flame.

By those I rescu'd, hated, scorn'd,—

Ah ! spare the painful tale—

I saw the hopes of youth and love,

Of truth and candour, fail.

Tir'd of a scene where low-born art

Could merit's due command,

Harass'd with toil, with sorrow worn,

I fought my native land.

These bruised arms and Knighthood's rank,

In six long summers won,

I bear ; to sooth a father's grief

For his unhappy son.

Yet still I feel the fear of love,

But why that fear deplore ?

It is the inmate of a heart

Where hope exists no more."

END OF PART I.

VOL. I.

G

PART II.

" Bleft are those
 " Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled
 " That they are not a pipe for Fortune's fingers
 " To found what stop she pleases. Give me a man
 " That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
 " In my heart's core, aye, in my heart of heart."

SHAKESPEARE.

TO Edgar then Rodolpho spoke ;

" What insolence deny'd,
 By gen'rous friendship's grateful hand
 Shall amply be supply'd.

And if the charmer of thy foul
 Thy high desert can move,
 Her haughty father shall be forc'd
 To court thy slighted love.

Oh ! Edgar, I have heard thee tell
 The story of thy woes,
 And felt that int'rest in thy fate
 Which sympathy bestows.

Scorning the snares which for my rank
 Ambitious beauty threw ;
 No artful smile, no studied glance,
 My cold attention drew.

Anxious

Anxious from every base reproach
My tow'ring fame to shield,
In science I amusement sought,
And honour in the field.

As foremost in the royal chase
I urg'd my rapid steed,
One day I met a lovely maid,
Attir'd in sorrow's weed.

Slow she approach'd; when near, she rais'd
Her long, disorder'd veil,
And show'd a face divinely fair,
But through dejection pale.

Wilt thou, she cried, Oh gallant Knight!
A Damsel's fears allay,
And swiftly to my lord the King
My anxious steps convey?

I have a tale of woe to tell,
Would I could access find!
All-righteous Heav'n, who knows my grief,
Will move the royal mind.

I would have sooth'd the fair distress'd,
But converse she delay'd:
I led her to the green wood tent,
Where still the monarch staid.

There in that eloquence of phrase
Which sorrow can bestow,
Prostrate at royal William's feet,
She told her tale of woe.

Her father, injur'd by a lord,
Rank'd in the royal train,
Had dar'd to utter his complaints
In treason's guilty strain.

With purpos'd insurrection charg'd,
Imprison'd and arraign'd;
He saw his ancient honours seiz'd,
His fair demefnes distrain'd.

And still th' inexorable law,
By mercy unconfin'd,
Had, to attainder of estate,
Life's deadly forfeit join'd.

The weeping beauty did not fear,
Tho' want prepar'd to seize
Her, whom luxurious grandeur rear'd
On the soft lap of ease.

She fear'd not scorn, tho' scorn with joy
The bow of satire strung,
To spoil the shrine where flattery late
Its gilded off'rings hung.

Her

Her gentle frame contain'd a soul
In filial duty brave ;
A father's life was what she fought
From fortune's wreck to save.

Stern is our royal master's soul,
The guardian of the law ;
Decided by the harsh decree,
No lenient grace he saw.

Thy sorrow for thy father's crimes,
He cry'd, shall ne'er atone ;
Unpunish'd, shall rebellion's voice
Insult the sacred throne ?

Oh ! Edgar, never can my eyes
Forget the awful scene ;
The horror of the lady's look,
Her wild disorder'd mien.

Then must he die ? she beat her breast,
She groan'd in deep despair :
Then must my father die ? she shriek'd,
And rent her flowing hair.

Oh ! save *him*, William ! take *my* life,
Let justice have its due !
You had a father, but, alas !
Your fire you never knew.

136 A GOSSIP'S STORY.

Whilst thus through all the echoing tent
 The stream of horror rung ;
 At once compassion, wonder, love,
 Within my bosom sprung.

If e'en the monarch's eye austere
 With pity seem'd to melt,
 Oh think how deep my softer soul
 Its thrilling impulse felt.

I risk'd my hopes ; but let me spare
 To tell each various art,
 By which, to mercy by degrees,
 I mov'd great William's heart.

The pardon gain'd, I flew with joy
 The mourner to console,
 And in her father's prison met
 The mistress of my soul.

By time subdu'd, her pious grief
 Seem'd fix'd, but yet resign'd ;
 And to despair's pale hollow cheek
 The calm of patience join'd.

She knelt beside her contrite fire,
 For him to Heav'n she pray'd ;
 Can beauty ever look more sweet
 Than thus in tears array'd ?

I gave

I gave the pardon—then my heart
A painful bliss confess'd;
When the rapt father's eager arms
His fainting daughter press'd.

Recov'ring from her trance of joy,
I saw her transport speak,
Irradiate her yet doubtful eye,
And flush her changing cheek.

Affur'd, confirm'd, with winning grace
Around my knees she clung:
She blest me, but her eyes by far
Outspoke her fault'ring tongue.

Now passion swelling in my soul,
A sudden impulse mov'd;
I caught the charmer to my heart,
And told her that I lov'd.

At once I claim'd her fire's assent,
And told my rank and state;
Boasting what blessings I design'd
Should worth like her's await.

Edgar! I know a lib'ral mind
Will own a terror here,
Lest gratitude on gen'rous hearts
Should lay a task severe.

I should have waited till her eyes
A soft esteem confess'd;
Ere e'en in private to her ear
I had my love express'd.

I err'd, my friend;—my pensive heart
Does oft its error own
When stead of love's impassion'd voice
I hear cold duty's tone.

To-morrow's sun (but can I then
Taste fulness of content?)
She seals with me the nuptial oath,
Oh may her heart assent!

E'en when I left her yesternight,
And fondly breath'd adieu,
And of the morrow talk'd, her cheek
Assum'd a paler hue.

Cold she withdrew her trembling hand,
And as she turn'd aside,
I saw a tear, the tears of love
Would she attempt to hide?

If to her fire I breathe a doubt,
He talks of virgin shame?
Of timid diffidence, which checks
Chaste beauty's bashful flame.

Still

Still as I listen to his words,
 Each sad suggestion flies,
 And all my future hours of life
 In prospect sweet arise.

O gallant Edgar! think me not
 The slave of jealous fear;
 The doubt that hangs upon my heart
 Is caus'd by love sincere.

Might but to-morrow make her blest,
 How welcome were the day!
 But while in talk we waste the hour,
 The night wears fast away.

My brave preserver; from thy breast
 Dismiss this gloom of woe;
 And with thy friend, on festal mirth,
 One happy day bestow."

"Blest be thy morrow," Edgar cry'd,
 "The first of happy days!
 But shall my father say his son
 At bridal feast delays?

Six annual fairs have seen his cheek
 Bedew'd with constant tears;
 Nor shall those sorrows cease to flow,
 Till Edgar's self appears,"

"Go then," Rodolpho rising, cried,
"If such thy kind desire,
Within my castle rest to-night,
To-morrow seek thy fire.

Yet when his fond impassion'd arms
Shall suffer thee to stray,
Reflect that Norfolk owes a debt
He lives but to repay.

The parting warriors now again
The hands of friendship join'd;
And Edgar, guided by a page,
Sought out the room assign'd.

They pass'd through many a marble hall,
And many a lofty dome,
With cedar lin'd, or richly grac'd
By Antwerp's costly loom.

The wish'd apartment gain'd, the Knight
Again admiring gaz'd;
For here, the wall with portraits hung,
The mimick pencil prais'd.

On one fine painting, full in sight,
He cast a startled view;
A woman's form; his beating heart
Confess'd the likeness true.

"Know'st

“ Know’st thou that lady ?” to the page

Impetuously he cried ;

“ It is Albina,” said the youth,

“ My master’s destin’d bride.”

“ Thy master’s bride, Albina, say—

The Baron Siward’s heir !”

“ The same, but scarce the painter’s art

Could sketch the peerless fair.”

The page retir’d—the Knight alone

Stood motionless in thought :

His lov’d Albina ! for whose sake

He Robert’s banners fought.

The hope that Norfolk’s friendship rais’d,

On her alone rely’d ;

Albina ! soul-distracting thought !

Is Norfolk’s destin’d bride.

Beneath a canopy of state,

Which grac’d the proud alcove,

In vain the downy couch invites

The frantick slave of love.

Still gazing wild with folded arms,

The portrait full in view,

He drives love’s arrows in his heart,

And barbs their shafts anew.

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Yet from Rodolpho's boding fear
A dawn of hope may break,
The tear that pain'd the gen'rous Earl
Might flow for Edgar's sake.

" Oh blasted be that impious hope!
Shall I the villain prove,
And steal from him I most esteem,
The idol of his love ?

No, from this moment every wish
Despairing I forego ;
'Tis better to be curs'd myself,
Than cause Rodolpho's woe.

Albina, tho' I must till death
Thy lovely form adore,
Thy lovely form, thy angel face,
Shall feast these eyes no more.

The story of my hapless love
Shall ne'er thy ear offend,
Nor fondly wake the pitying sigh
That wrongs my gen'rous friend.

That dear remembrance once bestow'd,
Thus from my arm I tear ;
Would I could tear her from my heart,
But she is rooted there."

Now

Now from his arm the string of pearl

He eagerly unties;

The string of pearl Albina gave,

His youthful valour's prize.

“ Go, bracelet, to Rodolpho's soul

A love like mine convey;

But teach the genial flame to burn

With more auspicious ray.

Go, when he binds thee on his arm

An equal joy impart,

As once I felt, when first the smile

Of beauty touch'd my heart.”

So pass'd the tedious night, now faint

Approaching morning gleams;

And e'en sad Edgar's woe-worn breast

Receives its gladd'ning beams.

One wish remain'd, it was to sooth

The anguish of his fire;

He hastens to the castle gate,

There meets Rodolpho's 'Squire.

To him the bracelet he consigns,

To bear it to his friend;

And with it say, that Edgar's prayers

Will still the Earl attend.

But

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But pensive visions of the night
 Had wak'd th' ill-omen'd dread,
That fresh distresses ripen'd hung
 O'er Edgar's fated head.

“ Howe'er severe on me,” he cries,
 “ The blow of anguish falls,
May peace and happy love secure
 These hospitable walls.”

Then, all his dearest hopes resign'd,
 Upon his horse he sprung;
The courser's hoofs re-echoing loud,
 Upon the campaign rung.

The Earl arose; he fought his friend,
 Then at his absence sigh'd;
And pensive, on his arm the pledge
 Of parting kindness ty'd:

: And now his bridal train he call'd,
 And vaulted on his steed;
'Twas snowy white, of faultless form,
 And sprung from gen'rous breed.

Exulting on Rodolpho's cheek
 Sate expectation warm;
And dignity and manly ease
 Seem'd blended in his form.

Rich

Rich was his vesture ; o'er his horse
 Embroider'd trappings flow'd ;
 But worth disclaiming outward pomp
 The Earl conspicuous shew'd.

At Siward's castle now arriv'd, .
 The joyful Baron came
 To meet the splendid cavalcade,
 And blest Rodolpho's name.

" Thou gen'rous friend, to whom I owe
 My fortune and my life,
 Come, ever welcome!" he exclaim'd,
 " Behold thy destin'd wife."

Slow was the fair Albina's step,
 And pensive was her air ;
 Her face was pallid as the veil
 Which held her beauteous hair.

Tho' deck'd in bridal robes of state,
 Yet still her looks express'd
 The victim of unhallow'd rites,
 For mournful orgies dress'd.

" Receive, my child," her father cried,
 " Thy virtues to reward,—
 Receive from thy fond parent's hand
 This brave and worthy lord.

No

No longer let thy maiden fears
A coy reserve impart;
Avow the love that Heaven approves,
And give him all thy heart."

Albina now her pensive eyes
On brave Rodolpho threw;
And when they met his ardent gaze,
They timidly withdrew.

He snatch'd her hand: "What! still, my fair,
This cold and distant fear?
Does my Albina doubt my love,
Or why distress'd appear?"

"Oh! rest assur'd, thou dearest trust
That Heaven on earth can give,
'Tis but to make my charmer blest
That now I wish to live.

"But yesternight, when robbers fell
My evening walk assail'd,
Lifeless on earth the servant sunk,
Who to defend me fail'd:

"When from my tir'd o'erpower'd arm
Its wonted vigour fled,
And death's eternal gloomy shade
Seem'd falling on my head:

"Memory,

"Memory, amid the tumult wild,
Thy lovely image drew;
And thy soft woes, in fancy seen,
Restor'd my strength anew.

"When rescu'd by a gallant knight
Whom Heav'n to save me sent,
Life seem'd a nobler gift, since life
Would now with thee be spent.

"But wherefore should I bless the hand
That did the gift bestow,
If from thy fix'd, thy cold disdain,
I only anguish know?"

"Let not my lord," Albina said,
"Such painful doubts suggest,
Nor think his merit fails to move
Albina's conscious breast.

"Can she forget, when scorn'd, refus'd,
In vain she mercy crav'd,
When, at the moment of despair,
His gen'rous pity sav'd?"

"If then his kind, but partial eyes,
Deems her a meet reward,
Duty shall prompt her grateful heart,
To bless her honour'd Lord."

END OF PART II.

PART

PART III.

" I am not of that feather to shake off
 " My friend when he most needs me. I do know him
 " A gentleman, that well deserves a help,
 " Which he shall have."

SHAKESPEARE.

NOW, while th' attendant train carous'd,
 And drain'd the festal bowl,
 While musick's various pow'rs combin'd,
 Entranc'd each joyful soul,

Rodolpho, whispering to his love,
 His Edgar's worth exprefs'd,
 And shew'd the bracelet he receiv'd
 From his departing guest.

Instant her looks, her trembling frame,
 Confess'd a wild alarm ;
 While her fix'd eyes, with frantick gaze,
 Dwelt on her lover's arm.

Vain was each effort to conceal,
 Surprise so highly wrought ;
 She fainted ; but Rodolpho's arms
 The sinking beauty caught.

Their

Their lovely mistress to support,
Th' attendant handmaids flew;
Reluctant from her opening eyes
The thoughtful Earl withdrew.

Cold o'er his soul each doubt confirm'd,
Its painful influence flung,
And heavy on his bended arm
His head recumbent hung.

When Siward, whose presaging heart
The cause too well divin'd,
With agitated pleading look,
Rodolpho quickly join'd.

Now all retir'd; a pause ensu'd;
To break it Siward try'd;
Check'd by Rodolpho's look, which spoke
Stern honour's-wounded pride.

At length he said, " Let not my Lord
Suspect a passion base:
Did e'er my daughter's guiltless heart
With mean desire debase?

" A rustick strippling at a joust
With victory was crown'd,
And gain'd the bracelet, which is now
Entwin'd thy arm around.

" My

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“ My daughter's hand bestow'd the prize,
But he audacious grew,
And dar'd, with bold presumptuous love,
Thy promis'd bride to view.

“ I drove him from my wide domain,
And many a year is past,
Since in the wars of Palestine
I trust he breath'd his last.

“ But when Albina on thy arm
The well-known bracelet view'd,
Her shame and scorn at Edgar's love
Were painfully renew'd.”

“ There need no pleas, I rest assur'd,”
Rodolpho answer'd mild;

“ But this young Edgar, only once
Did he behold thy child ?

“ No plea of merit had the youth ?
Was love his only claim ?”

He paus'd, and Siward's conscious cheek
Confess'd the blush of shame.

“ His courage,” Siward cried, “ my lands
From lawless ruffians sav'd;
But when I offer'd him reward,
His pride the offer wav'd.

“ Yet

“ Yet till his manner, voice, and look,
His latent views express'd,
Within my castle he abode,
My brave acknowledg'd guest.”

Th' indignant Earl now check'd the tear
Which unpermitted stole,
And to the rigour of his fate
Compos'd his manly soul.

“ Go, o'er thy daughter's grief,” he cried,
“ Drop pity's soothing balm,
Whilst I in yon sequester'd grove
Regain a mental calm.”

But not the still sequester'd grove
Could calm Rodolpho's soul,
Still on his mind Albina's tears
And Edgar's anguish stole.

Now beauty in the net of love
His heart close captive held;
Now grateful friendship's manlier force
The Syren's snare repell'd.

“ Did less of beauty, less of worth,
Around Albina blaze,
Less were the torture to resign,
But less would be the praise.

“ For

“ For this did Edgar from my head
A certain death remove,
That I should sever from his breast
The last faint hope of love ?

“ Did but his soul for fortune pant,
Or fought he pow’r to gain,
How would I gratify each wish !
Yet still the fair retain.

“ Retain the fair ! retain her ! how ?
What now her vows demand ?
Know that another has her heart,
Yet seize her captive hand ?

“ Forbid it, Pity ! Honour, scorn
Indelible disgrace !
Love may with tortures tear my heart,
But shall not make it base.”

He call’d a page :—to Edgar’s house
He bade him point the road :
Not distant, in a grassy vale,
Appear’d the plain abode.

A hawthorn hedge the garden bound,
’Twas fill’d with many a flow’r ;
A woodbine round a maple twin’d,
Compos’d a sylvan bow’r.

And

And there the aged Orcar oft,
 His task of labour done,
 Gaz'd on the spangled arch of heav'n,
 And mus'd upon his son.

There too, that gallant son return'd,
 He fought his griefs to calm;
 And pour'd upon the wounds of love
 Consolatory balm.

“ Ah ! whither, dear unhappy boy,
 Does thy distraction tend ?
 Far swifter than yon sailing clouds
 Life hastens to its end.

“ Still as our steps, advancing, verge
 On its declining stage,
 The prospects faint and distant grow
 Which did our youth engage.

“ Our passions, as we bend to earth,
 Imbibe a sombre gloom ;
 And lengthening with our setting sun,
 The shadows reach the tomb.

“ Then chief on those who patient tread
 An irksome path of woe,
 Bright bursting from a happier clime,
 The streams of glory flow.

“ Nor

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“ Nor urge *my* disappointed hopes,
I do not *now* complain :
When I beheld thee, one embrace
Repaid each former pain.

“ I ask'd not for my darling wealth,
Virtue was all my pray'r ;
And Heav'n did limit other gifts,
To be more lavish there.

“ Yet, Edgar, if thy patient soul
The taunt of pride repell'd,
Patient endur'd the soldier's toil,
Yet saw his rights withheld ;

“ Oh ! bid it, in one trial more,
Invulnerable prove,
And triumph o'er the envious shaft
Of disappointed Love.”

“ Envy ! Oh, father,” cried the youth,
“ My heart the term disdains ;
That heart, where next, bright maid, to thee,
The brave Rodolpho reigns.

“ Had any suitor cross'd my hopes,
With merit less replete,
I would have check'd his gay career,
Or perish'd at his feet.

“ Father,

“ Father, thou know’st Albina’s face,
Far lovelier was her mind;
While Siward favour’d, I full oft
With her in converse join’d.

“ And still the maid would tell the joys
On virtuous love conferr’d;
Deceiv’d by sanguine hope, I thought
Her theme to me referr’d.

“ Rodolpho now, with purest joy
Shall listen to that theme,
Feel each licentious wish confin’d,
Yet taste a bliss supreme.

“ For, him she weaves the martial scarf:
For him the garland wreathes:
Strikes at his call the soft-ton’d harp,
And strains soul-piercing breathes.

“ Oh! let us seek some distant spot;
My love I will suppress;
The father, whom till now I griev’d,
Henceforward I will bless.

“ For thee, and thee alone, I’ll stay
The purpose of despair;
Conscious that man is born to woe,
Those woes I’ll firmly bear.”

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He said, and with a sickly smile
The drooping Orcar cheer'd,
When sudden at the wicket gate
The gen'rous Earl appear'd.

He saw his friend, a painful thrill
Seem'd ev'ry thought to check,
'Till brave Rodolpho's outstretch'd arms
Were circled round his neck.

Long paus'd the Earl, then fault'ring spoke,
" 'Twas much unkind to go,
To leave me on this awful day
Did little friendship show.

" I come to lead thee to the hall,
The feasts, the sports attend ;
And ev'n Albina's self requests
The presence of my friend."

" Does she request it?" Edgar cry'd,
And fix'd his glaring eye ;
" She doth request it," saith the Earl,
" Can'st thou the fair deny ?"

" No, I will go!"—Forth from the bow'r
With frantick speed he sprung ;
His troubled soul to phrensy'd rage
By fancy'd wrong was stung,

Now

Now whilst upon his panting breast
His mail he firmly ties,
Or car on pensive Norfolk turn'd
His mild persuasive eyes.

"Great Earl, shall not that youth's despair
Thy kind concern engage?
He is my son, my only child,
And lo! I droop with age."

"Oh venerable fire! no wrong
Thy Edgar shall annoy;
But follow, and prepare thy soul
To meet a scene of joy."

Silent and swift across the vale
The tortur'd friends return'd;
Dejection sunk Rodolpho's heart,
With anger Edgar's burn'd.

"This low-born sneer, this mean device,"
Thus to himself he said,
"Shall all her former virtues blast,
And all her charms degrade."

"I thank her, for I now am free,
My heart each fetter breaks;
From visions of ideal worth
My wond'ring soul awakes."

“ With smiles of cold contempt I'll meet
Her proud exulting eye;
My heart may in the conflict break,
But it shall never sigh.”

Now broke upon his loathing view
The castle's turrets white ;
Those turrets which in happier days
Inspir'd a gay delight.

Far diff'rent now, each lofty spire,
And gaily swelling dome,
Increas'd the horrors of despair,
And deepen'd all its gloom.

Now joyful, at the Earl's return,
The portals were unbarr'd ;
The bridal train in order stood
Within the castle-yard.

Rodolpho fair Albina sought
Within the hall of state ;
Affrighted, trembling, and dismay'd,
The mournful beauty fate.

Silent her father stood, his looks
Spake horror's pale preface ;
Ambition's fullen gloom, the frown
Of disappointed rage.

Now

Now Edgar on his long-lov'd maid
 Throws his disdainful eyes;
 But when he sees her grief of soul,
 Far diff'rent passions rise.

"Those clasped hands, that solemn look,
 Do they insulting prove?
 Thine, Norfolk, was the mean device,
 Thou tyrant in thy love!"

His trembling hand now grasps his sword,
 But honour, soon alarm'd,
 Determines yet to spare a foe,
 Unguarded and unarm'd.

"Yet, haughty Earl, the hour shall come,
 Nor distant is the time,
 When, bursting from each vein, thy blood
 Shall expiate thy crime.

"Till then, with insolent delight
 My heartfelt anguish view."
 So thought the youth, and o'er his face
 His beaver sternly drew.

Radiant as in a night of frost
 Beams Cynthia's silver car,
 Albina look'd, through chilling grief
 Each charm seem'd lovelier far.

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Rodolpho took one parting gaze,
A long and deep farewell;

It seem'd at once eternal love
And fix'd regret to tell.

Her father seiz'd her hand, she rose,
To Norfolk's Earl she came;
Reluctant was her ling'ring step,
And terror shook her frame.

"Can'st thou," she cry'd, "the sudden pang,
Which reason blam'd, forgive?"

I never more shall see the youth,
Yet suffer him to live."

The Earl receiv'd the proffer'd hand
That Siward had resign'd;

"Thou givest her to me," he said;
"I do," the Sire rejoin'd.

"Then thus with her I pay the debt
Which I to valour ow'd;"

He turn'd, and on his frantick friend
Th' angelick maid bestow'd.

Then whilst o'er all his glowing face
Benignant transport broke,

Thus to the agonized pair

The gen'rous Noble spoke.

"Sweet

" Sweet mourner, turn, Rodolpho yields
 To Edgar's claim, thy vows ;
 Turn, lovely maid, with tender smiles
 Now greet thy destin'd spouse.

" Fortune and merit both combin'd,
 Thy passion shall approve ;
 Nor thou, brave Edgar, doubt the friend
 That gives thee e'en his love.

" Siward, if still thy narrow heart
 Can humble worth disdain,
 Know, Edgar from this hour is lord
 Of many a fair domain.

" Soon o'er the lands which I bestow
 His lib'ral care shall shine ;
 Give rapture to his father's heart,
 And self-reproach to thine.

" Nor, Edgar, let a friendly fear
 Thy present bliss decrease ;
 Approving virtue cheers my soul,
 And all within is peace.

Charm'd by the joys which heav'n around
 Benevolence hath thrown,
 I share the blessings I impart,
 Nay, make them all my own.

" Hereafter in some penfive hour
Should selfish thoughts offend,
To banish every mean regret,
I'll seek my happy friend.

" There as he shines, in fortune, fame,
In love, in virtue blest,
The musick of his grateful voice
Shall harmonize my breast."



*Continuation of the 12th Chapter of THE
GOSSIP'S STORY.*

WHEN Sir William Milton had finished the long manuscript, Captain Target, who had with great difficulty refrained from paying his respects to Morpheus during the recital, began to rouse his faculties by emphatical commendations, which he happily divided between the story and the reader.

Marianne, whose eyes swam with tears, rejoiced that the lovers were at last made happy together, of which she had once many doubts.

Mr.

Mr. Alfop applying every word which Marianne uttered in favour of love, to his own advantage, took courage, and ventured to give his opinion; which was, that it was very cleverly brought about to make my Lord give up some demesnes to Edgar, for he thought the *Old Gentleman* never would have allowed his daughter to marry a man, who was not only of low birth, but who had no *fortune*.

“Mr. Alfop,” said Sir William contemptuously, “overlooks the circumstance which ennobled Edgar; he bore arms in Palestine.”

Captain Target could not suffer a hint in favour of the military line to pass unnoticed. He bowed profoundly to the Baronet, and declared himself happy in entertaining the same honourable sentiments of the character of a soldier; adding in a theatrical style, “None but the brave deserve the fair. Is not that your opinion, Miss Dudley?”

“I hope, Sir,” said Louisa, colouring

at this unexpected reference, "I shall not offend your allowable partiality for your *own* profession by observing, that I am glad Rodolpho is not left unhappy. Indeed I think he is placed in the most enviable situation, since the consciousness of having performed a highly generous action, must afford a perfect delight to an exalted mind. But Edgar labours under the weight of an obligation, which he never can repay; besides, he may fear that his transports are the cause of distressing his benefactor."

"My sentiments, Madam, respecting the sublime pleasures of generosity entirely coincide with yours," said Sir William; "but I am sorry to hear you speak of gratitude as a *painful* sensation."

"Not absolutely so," replied Louisa, distressed at an observation which was accompanied by a look of angry penetration. "I only think Rodolpho's is the most enviable lot. He is placed in such a favourable point of view that had I been Albina, I
should

should have felt half sorry to resign such a worthy lover."

"Not if you had been previously attached to Edgar, sister, and recollected what he had suffered for your sake," said the gentle Marianne. "True, Madam," exclaimed Alsop with a deep sigh; "but every body don't know what true love is."

"Indeed, sister," returned Louisa, laughing, "Mr. Alsop is a better adept in love affairs than I am: but let us change the subject of conversation. It grows too interesting."

Mr. Dudley now observed, that if the manuscript had entertained his friends, it answered the purpose for which he had introduced it. Its merit, he said, consisted in its simplicity, and he was going to make some observations on the studied ornaments with which many modern poets overload their productions, till they obscure the sense, and disturb the harmony of the language; when the entrance of a servant to announce supper

happily relieved the Danbury gentlemen from a literary discussion, of which, to say the truth, they were not very fond.

On their return home, Mr. Alsop asked his friend's opinion respecting the present state of his affairs. The Captain swore they were in an admirable train, and mentioned Louisa's laughing at him, as a convincing proof that she was apprehensive of his influence over her sister's mind.

In short, things were thought ripe for the grand attack, and it was agreed that a letter should be written expressive of Mr. Alsop's passion, which his confidant promised to deliver. They then separated for the evening; the Captain to fabricate a speech, intimating a struggle between love and friendship; and Mr. Alsop to read the Polite Letter-writer, prior to the composition of his intended epistle.

C H A P. XIII.

A letter (but not the one the reader was induced to hope for) calls forth some very antiquated notions.

THE post arrived at Stannadine soon after the departure of the visitors, and Mr. Dudley, on receiving a packet from his London correspondent, wished his daughters a good night, and retired to his chamber.

The intelligence it contained was of the unpleasant kind. It certified the report, that the French had detached a squadron to lay wait for the West-India fleet, which was destitute of adequate means of defence against an unexpected attack; it also added, that the capture of a ship in which they had hoped to receive large remittances, had precipitated the ruin of Mr. Tonnereau's firm, which had that day stopped payment.

While Mr. Dudley sat meditating on his misfortunes, with the deep regret of a man
sen-

sensible that he had been guilty of an irretrievable error, Louisa entered the room. Mr. Dudley's agitated mind was strongly impressed on his countenance; but his daughter was in too much disorder to regard it. Pale, trembling, and unable to speak, she gave him a letter which *she* had just received; and while he perused it, she sunk into a chair. I shall copy this alarming epistle :

‘ TO MISS DUDLEY.

‘ Madam,

‘ I make bold, though a perfect stranger,
 ‘ to trespass upon your goodness. I am
 ‘ told that you are shortly to be married to
 ‘ Sir William Milton. I must say, Madam,
 ‘ for all I have heard of you, I wish you a
 ‘ better husband than such a villain. I am a
 ‘ poor widow woman, who keeps a coffee-
 ‘ house in — street, and a few years ago
 ‘ my daughter (a very handsome, well-be-
 ‘ haved young woman) went to the Indies,
 ‘ in hopes to make her fortune. She there
 ‘ met Sir William, then only Captain Milton,
 ‘ and

‘ and he fell in love with her, and she with
 ‘ him. He promised to marry her, and so
 ‘ at last ruined her. But he kept her like a
 ‘ Princess all the while she staid there. Poor
 ‘ creature, the worse for her now. For at
 ‘ last he quarrelled with her, and left her be-
 ‘ hind him when he came to England, and
 ‘ would do nothing for her, and she is come
 ‘ home in great distress indeed. She has two
 ‘ children, Madam, and I have hard work
 ‘ to maintain myself these bad times. So I
 ‘ hope you will persuade Sir William to do
 ‘ something handsome, and I shall be bound
 ‘ to pray for you; from

‘ Your humble servant,

‘ MARY MORTON.

‘ N. B. He ought to do something for his
 ‘ children, they are too young to affront him.”

Mr. Dudley, after perusing the letter, cast
 his eyes upon his daughter, and asked her
 what could be done.

“Can I, Sir,” said Louisa, bursting into
 tears, “vow to love and to honour a man
 who

who labours under such an imputation ? Cruelty is added to licentious perfidy. My dear father, forgive me ! My very soul revolts against this union."

" Oh worthy of thy excellent mother," said Mr. Dudley : " No, Louisa, you cannot. I am far from thinking so lightly as some people do of the vicious irregularities in which many young men indulge : but to abandon the unhappy creature he has seduced, to the horrors and temptations of poverty ; to make no provision for his innocent, helpless offspring ! Rather would I see thee a beggar, than suffer thee to contaminate thyself by participating in his guilty affluence. He capable of a generous affection ! Impossible !"

" You have relieved my anxiety," replied Miss Dudley ; " yet why should I doubt that my dear father would see the atrocity of such an action in as strong a light as myself ? But, Sir, you have had letters from London. Not distressing ones I hope."

" They

“ They are not consolatory, my child,” resumed Mr. Dudley ; “ but we must first decide upon this affair.”

Louisa, who perceived her father agitated by a contrariety of passions, guessed at the intelligence he would not communicate, and regretted that she had rushed into his presence, to overwhelm him with the additional weight of her own sorrows. She strove to compose herself, and again perused the letter from Mrs. Morton. She began to think it possible she might have been betrayed by her secret prejudices, to adopt a severe opinion without sufficient proofs; and, determined not to trust to her own judgment, asked her father, if the letter did not bear evident marks of being dictated by strong resentment.

Had Mr. Dudley seen what passed in his daughter's mind at that moment, he would have contemplated the triumph of filial piety, desirous of giving up every thing but its integrity, to ward the shafts of misfortune from
him.

him. He would have admired the virtue that warred with even the innocent and allowable propensities of the heart, and still more would his daughter's character have risen in his eye, from her attempt to hide the intended sacrifice from his observation, by giving to the excuses she was forming, the air of extenuating love. He was ignorant of these circumstances, and when Louisa asked him, if it would not at least be just to allow Sir William an opportunity of justifying his conduct, he supposed it possible the dislike his daughter at first expressed against her lover, had subsided; and was succeeded by a degree of attachment.

But since love, though indulged to the degree of dotage, would not, in Mr. Dudley's opinion, obviate the many evils incident in an alliance between a virtuous woman and a profligate man; he only wished, from the supposed state of Louisa's affections, that Sir William might be able to justify himself from the severe imputations cast upon

upon his character. On reading the letter again, he thought it probable that spleen, violence, and disappointment might aggravate the offence. "But depend upon it, my love," said he, "the charge has some foundation. It would be wrong not to hear what he can plead in his defence, and indeed you cannot now decline his addresses, without giving him a reason for your conduct. I will speak to him to-morrow morning."

Louisa now pressed her father to discover the purport of his intelligence from London, but he eluded inquiry, determined that she should know nothing more of his misfortunes, till Mrs. Morton's accusation was either refuted or confirmed. He rightly thought, that though pecuniary circumstances may influence a woman's choice, when no solid objections can be made to the lover; innocence, if bribed by the wealth of the universe, should shrink from a connection with vice. He therefore pretended the ease he did not feel, and reminding her of the
lateness

lateness of the hour, with a fervent careſs diſmiſſed her to reſoſe. It was a bleſſing which neither of them enjoyed that night: beſides the preſſure of their own ſorrows, each of them laboured under the apprehenſion of what the other endured; for the filial and paternal ties are at leaſt as ſuſceptible of theſe emotions, as either friendſhip or love.

C H A P. XIV.

A wealthy lover is diſmiſſed by a family upon the eve of bankruptcy, for what the world may ſtyle ſpirited conduct.

MISS Dudley riſing early next morning, as was her uſual cuſtom, to ſuperintend domeſtick affairs, met Sir William in the paſſage leading to the breakfast-room. He had an unuſual degree of urbanity in his aſpect, and ſeizing her hand with an air of gallantry, begged the favour of a few minutes' converſation; Louiſa reluctantly aſſented; and he gave her a letter he had juſt received from

from his mother, in which her Ladyship expressed her eagerness to receive a daughter of her late beloved friend, in a yet *more* endearing point of view, than that in which her nephew hoped to have presented one. She concluded with begging, that his amiable mistress would sacrifice a few scruples of punctilio to her earnest intreaties. Her health, she said, was apparently declining, and she felt all a parent's anxiety to see the happiness of her son secured, and to participate in his transports, while she was yet able to enjoy them. Sir William strengthened this argument by urging his own impatience; he flattered himself he had not been wholly undeserving her favour; settlements he was ready to discuss with Mr. Dudley; but as he meant by their liberality to prove his high sense of her merits, no objections could arise on that head. He concluded with hoping, that as female coquetry had no part in her character, she would shorten the time of probation, and favour him with an early day.

Louisa,

Louisa, with streaming eyes, perused Lady Milton's letter, and from the maternal tenderness visible in every part, was led to wish that she could gratify the kind request. She started from her reverie at Sir William's last words; the proof of his unworthiness flashed upon her mind, and while her soul overflowed with veneration for the mother, it shrank in abhorrence from her son. She attempted to speak, but was unable. She turned aside, her face glowing with confusion, and clung to the arm of her chair as if to support her trembling frame. Sir William, who construed her behaviour into maiden delicacy, was going, by declarations of everlasting love, to deliver her from her embarrassment; when Mr. Dudley entered the room. Louisa never beheld her father approach with more pleasure; she instantly rose, and referring her lover to him for an explanation, hastily withdrew.

Though the young Baronet would have preferred receiving from his mistress the desired

fired consent, he was not thrown into despair by this reference. He gave Mr. Dudley his mother's letter, and informed him that he had been urging Miss Dudley to favour him with a speedy union. Lady Milton's consent was, he said, of no consequence in one point of view, as his fortune was perfectly independent, and in his own possession; but as it implied a just respect for the Lady he so highly esteemed, he could not but rejoice in every tribute that was paid to his Louisa's virtues.

Mr. Dudley, after observing that he was the last man upon earth to whom apologies for filial deference were necessary, declared his grateful sense of Lady Milton's favourable sentiments of his family. He then hinted, that before the proposed alliance could take place, a very painful subject must be discussed.

Sir William, supposing he meant settlements, replied, that in all pecuniary concerns, Miss Dudley's wishes should be the only bound to his liberality.

“I do

“ I do not doubt your generosity on that head, Sir William : it was to another circumstance I alluded. But let me premise, that you see before you a man of bankrupt fortunes ; one who has ruined himself and his child by a fatal confidence ; one who has nothing but his integrity left. Be pleased, Sir, in our future conversation to remember this circumstance.”

Sir William, grasping Mr. Dudley's hand, protested the intelligence gave him no pain except upon his account. He would with pleasure afford him all the assistance which his ample fortune could bestow. He would settle upon him what income he should judge necessary for his support ; and as to his Louisa, the enjoyments of wealth would be doubled to him by her consenting to share them. He thanked Heaven he had no occasion to bound his expences by parsimonious rules, and liberality was the darling passion of his soul.

Mr.

Mr. Dudley bowed with the air of one who would rather avoid than court the favour of proud munificence. Anxious, however, to avoid offending the haughty youth he intended to reprove, he expressed a lively sense of his generous promises. "Indulge me, Sir," said he, "with the privilege our present situation claims, and suffer me not only to act the part of a father to my girl, but of a real friend to you. A report has reached us which has given us both pain; and a just regard for Louisa's future peace compels me to ask the nature of your connexion with Miss Morton?"

A stroke of electricity could not have more sensibly affected Sir William Milton. A deep suffusion stole over his gloomy features, which was soon succeeded by a livid paleness. There needed no skill in physiognomy to exclaim, "Guilty, upon mine honour."

Mr. Dudley, who hoped his silence was at
 VOL. I. I least

least a proof of contrition, proceeded : " It is not my wish, Sir, further to distress you ; I see and pity your confusion. Few of us can walk in the unerring path of rectitude ; and perhaps a sincere endeavour to reclaim our wandering steps is all that can be expected from human infirmity. Though licentious indulgencies ever were and must be criminal, I am willing to allow something for the impetuosity of youthful passions ; the influence of dissipated society ; and the unrestrained freedom of manners in which Europeans indulge themselves, in the luxurious climate of the East. But there are some circumstances in the distressing account which shocks credibility, and I doubt not but you will exculpate yourself from *them*."

" Name them," said Sir William, in an imperious accent.

" That you have abandoned the unhappy creature you seduced, to want and all its horrid temptations. Nay, that you have neglected

neglected to provide for your own helpless, unoffending offspring."

"You must give up the author of this report," resumed the Baronet, in a loud, authoritative tone.

"Not till you in a satisfactory manner refute the charge."

"I scorn to answer anonymous scandal," said Sir William. "If you esteem me a villain on slender proofs—retain your opinion."

"I should rejoice in your vindication; but this warmth is no step towards it. The consequences of my thinking you a villain, is my daughter's rejection of your address."

"You speak, Mr. Dudley, as if the obligations were on *your* side. I have a due sense of your daughter's merit; but love has not so blinded my reason as to make me undervalue my own pretensions."

"I perceive, Sir," said Mr. Dudley, "that you *remember* my poverty: but I am still rich in my child, nor dare I intrust you with my only remaining treasure, till I am assured

I commit her to the protection of a man of principle and honour. You frown, Sir; I cannot be silenc'd by a frown. The man who can so far preserve his equanimity of mind during the ruin of his fortune, as to ask nothing of the wealthy, is too rich to fear their resentment."

"Did you, Mr. Dudley, formerly find this intellectual wealth a good marketable commodity?" interrogated Sir William. "I rather suspect you did not fully appreciate its value, till you retired from mercantile pursuits."

"If by reminding me of the profession I once followed, you mean to throw any reflection on the general character of a British merchant, you rather expose your own want of information respecting the resources and wealth of this empire, than discredit me. I glory in having stimulated the industry of thousands; increased the natural strength of my country; and enlarged her revenue and reputation, as far as a private individual could.

could. My fall has not been accelerated by vice, extravagance, or dishonesty: but we wander from the point. Disputes of this nature are only unnecessary aggravations. If you continue to refuse the desired explanation, I can no longer consider you as Louisa's lover; and whatever my sentiments of your conduct may be, it is only in that character that I can claim any right to inquire into it."

"I question," said Sir William, "if *that character* gives you the right to which you pretend. But it is not from *you*, Sir, that I shall take my dismissal. I must see Miss Dudley, I will know how far you have prejudiced her against me. She may perhaps explain *your* motives for this extraordinary interference."

"I have no improper ones," replied Mr. Dudley, rising to ring the bell. Then addressing the servant who came in, he desired that Louisa would immediately attend. The gentlemen remained sullenly silent till she entered the room.

"My dear," said Mr. Dudley, "Sir William Milton wishes to speak to you, perhaps he will favour you with the explanation he has refused me." He then attempted to withdraw; Louisa fixed her pleading eyes upon him, as if intreating his stay; but he determined to resist their silent language; till Sir William observed that he had nothing to urge to Miss Dudley which it was improper for her father to hear.

"I find, Madam," said the haughty lover, "that I have forfeited Mr. Dudley's esteem. I wish to know if *you* too consider me as a base seducer; the betrayer of innocence; one who meanly abandons the creature he has plunged into guilt: nay, who deserts his own helpless, unoffending offspring? Are you too, Madam, resolved to withhold from me the name of my accuser?"

"If my father," replied Louisa, "has informed you of the charge, you must know in what light I consider it. I should desert the female character if I was destitute of delicacy
and

and compassion : and unless you wish to *disprove* these censures, of what use can it be to discover from whence they proceed?"

" I perceive," returned Sir William, "(I wish I could say with indifference,) the slender hold I have of your affections. Perhaps, Madam, it was the splendour of my offers alone that procured me *even* a momentary attention."

" Had you, Sir, appeared to me at first in the light you now do, not even your *splendid* offers would have excited a moment's hesitation. I cannot reconcile my heart to an husband deficient in moral principle."

" And may I ask," exclaimed the peremptory lover, " what that high standard of perfection is by which those who aspire to you must be measured?"

" The standard after which you inquire, Sir William, does not exceed moderation : it is humble like my own deserts. But we only agitate each other ; permit me to withdraw."

"No, by my soul, I cannot lose you!" cried Sir William, in violent emotion. He would have bent his knee, but recollecting that Mr. Dudley was present, refrained from the undue condescension. He gazed upon her a few moments, and then in a low tone said, "You could not treat me with this indifference if you ever loved me. But even at this moment you scornfully enjoy my agony."

"As these censures," resumed Miss Dudley, "are merely intended to evade a charge you do *not* deny, I need not labour to re-instate myself in *your* good opinion. Yet I could wish to preserve Lady Milton's, and will intreat as a *last* favour, that, when you inform her of what has passed, you will give as candid an account of me as can consist with your own vindication."

"Sovereign contempt, by Heaven! But, Madam, you mistake me if you think to awe me into supplicatory submission. However highly you may rate my love, I can borrow some of your philosophy to conceal its pangs."

May

May you find a worthier lover, or at least one who is a better adept in the disguises of courtship."

Sir William then ordered his horses, and Mr. Dudley, after an invitation to stay breakfast, which was coolly declined, did not oppose his departure.

CHAP. XV.

Calamity frequently expands a generous heart.

MR. Dudley attempted to fortify his daughter's mind with those principles, which not only blunt the keenest arrows of disappointment, but convert them into blessings. "Your dream of happiness, my love," said he, "appears to be terminated: yet from the calm consistency of your conduct, I trust you are not destitute of those mental supports, without which all that the world calls good is but splendid misery. You feel, my Louisa, that you have acted as you ought, and that reflection will enable you to support

even the painful discovery of the unworthiness of a favoured lover." "It was your recommendation, Sir," replied Louisa, "which first induced me to accept Sir William Milton's offers. I relied upon your judgment, and felt assured that the good qualities you ascribed to him would excite my esteem, my gratitude, and my love. I have every reason to rejoice that we have been convinced of the defects in his temper and conduct, before it became my painful duty to endure them. But I fear, my dear father, that the termination of this connection may be of serious consequences to you?"

"When your mother died," replied Mr. Dudley, "I lost my high relish for the comforts and pleasures affluence bestows. I trust my heart has not been tainted by misanthropy, but I have been so accustomed to seek for my pleasures and comforts out of my own mind, that to renounce society, and to seclude myself from the world, will scarcely excite a sigh upon my own account. For you, my child,

child, I deeply feel; your spirits have not been broken by repeated trials, and, rising into life, you look upon it with all the sanguine preference of youth. Anxious to preserve to you the prosperity you have hitherto enjoyed, I considered Sir William's apparent generosity with too favourable an eye; but no more of him. Amidst the ruin of my fortunes, I rejoice that the little estate your grandfather left you in Lancashire for pocket-money will preserve you from indigence. You have not to thank me for this reserve, it was happily secured from my indiscretion, and consequently could not be sacrificed to an artful, ungenerous friend."

“ My dearest father,” said Miss Dudley, “ do not afflict me by these self-upbraidings. I owe you a debt I never can discharge. Not to mention the thousand kind attentions which have hitherto made my life a round of delights, it is from you I have received a superior education ; you instilled into my infant soul principles which, unless my own fault,

fault, must insure my present and future happiness. Why, Sir, for I will speak proudly, should not *your* daughter be able to find pleasure and comfort in the resources of her own mind as well as yourself? We shall live very comfortably upon that dear little estate you talk of. I always had a turn for œconomy and management; am quite a cottager in my heart, I assure you. The few friends we possess will continue to esteem us in any station; and as to general acquaintance, I never considered them important to my happiness."

"A cottage life, my love," resumed Mr. Dudley, "is not so pleasant in reality as in theory. Like every other state it has its vexations, even for those who were born with no higher hopes. To them who have been accustomed to the elegant enjoyments of life, it presents evils that patience and fortitude may teach us to support; but which are doubtless evils. To you they will be
less

less painful than to a light frivolous mind, and this is all my consolation."

Mr. Dudley then asked if Marianne had been informed of his perplexities? Louisa answered in the negative; but owned that her sister had lately made some inquiries to which (from an idea that it would be most agreeable to her father) she had given evasive answers.

Mr. Dudley commended her prudence. "When your grandmother took Marianne," said he, "it was with the express condition that she should exclusively be considered as *her* child. I trust you possess her friendship, and will occasionally receive substantial proofs of it: yet to be wholly cast as a dependant upon her bounty would not, I think, contribute to the happiness of either. She is dutiful, affectionate, and generous; but her feelings are peculiarly lively; and, as is the case with most people of strong sensibility, there is some degree of uncertainty in her conduct. For my own part, there is
scarcely

scarcely a misery I would not sooner endure, than pension myself upon my child, with an apprehension that by so doing I might prevent her from forming such connections as her fortune and merit might otherwise attract. Had Mr. Pelham been agreeable to her, I think I could have been happy in the protection of such a son. I have judged from her cast of character, that a single life would be most conducive to her happiness; but as even candour itself could hardly acquit me of interested views, were I to urge such advice in my present situation, I have only to hope that I shall be able to conceal from her the present state of my affairs, until she selects some worthy admirer for her husband. Our expences at Stannadine indeed are considerable, yet I think continuing them a few months longer, from the hope of her forming a suitable attachment, is justifiable. I shall not scruple applying to her for a share of them; besides, my love, (here Mr. Dudley faintly smiled,) perhaps

perhaps a publick enemy may prove more favourable to me than an insidious friend."

Miss Dudley acquiesced in these opinions, and Marianne soon joined the party, anxious to know the cause of Sir William Milton's hasty departure. Her father was happy to hear her, after the perusal of Mrs. Morton's letter, express strong detestation of libertine principles; a sentiment which, I will affirm, is natural to a delicate unvitiated female mind.

Mr. Dudley then informed his daughters, that some unexpected business would call him to London. He lamented that he should lose the society which was so delightful to him; but yet would not be so selfish as to desire them to resign the country, while glowing in the richest robe of summer, to accompany him to a dirty, deserted town. Louisa guessing at her father's real motives for declining their company, acquiesced in the pretended one: and Marianne was too much enamoured with purling streams, and moss-grown dells, to endure the thought of leaving Stannadine.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

An interesting adventure. The purblind God of Love dispatched upon two different errands, commits an irreparable mistake.

THE interesting particulars I have been relating afforded the greatest treat to my neighbours that they had enjoyed for many years. Two lovers at first encouraged, then hastily dismissed, opened a fine field for conjecture. Curiosity, which had hitherto been employed in successively detecting the extravagance, parsimony, careless negligence, and suspicious watchfulness of Miss Dudley's domestic management, was entirely diverted from family arrangements, to consider what *could* be the cause of these revolutions. After many debates, we at last finally determined, that Miss Marianne refused Mr. Pelham, because her father

ther gave him a bad character; and that Sir William Milton *flew* off, when he discovered Louisa had no fortune.

The frequent visits of Captain Target and Mr. Alsop to Stannadine were another inexhaustible topic of conversation. I observed that this summer had proved the healthiest I had ever known. None of my friends answered my inquiries with complaints of *feeling* they did *not know how*: not one creature had a nervous attack or was out of spirits. Sometimes we dispatched a nobleman in a coach and four to fetch off Marianne, and then again created a group of bailiffs, armed with an execution, to drive out the whole family. For my own part, I made a very prudential use of this general solicitude. Whenever I laboured under any of those little perplexities which mistresses of a family sometimes feel, I introduced the Dudleys, and can truly say, that more than once it prevented my party from discovering that my coffee was cold, and my silver waiter dreadfully tarnished.

My

My friendship for Miss Cardamum would have given me pain, on account of the evident dereliction of her beaux; but happily that lady had accompanied her papa to Scarborough, from whence she wrote very sprightly letters to Mrs. Medium, obliquely intimating, that she had danced with two of the first gentlemen of fashion there, who had said very *soft* things to her. She inquired with perfect *nonchalance*, whether Alsop or Target had run away with Marianne Dudley yet; declaring either of them were very likely to draw in a raw young creature, who had seen nothing of the world. I considered these observations as an unquestionable proof that they had totally forfeited my good opinion.

I am however willing to hope that the reader's regard is not so wholly withdrawn from them, but that curiosity is still anxious to know the event of the letter, which we left Mr. Alsop composing in the twelfth chapter. It was indeed a very unfortunate performance, for though
written

written in a fair legible hand, and very correctly spelt, it was so long in finishing, that before it was ready to present, Mr. Dudley had set out for London. As it began with stating, that the reason which determined him to that mode of address was to avoid the jealous attention of her father, the very basis on which it was founded being subverted, the unhappy edifice fell to the ground: and thus the offspring of the Loves and Graces was smothered in its birth. But still the heroick Alsop was not discouraged. How persevering and indefatigable is love!

To account for the confidence which swelled his hopes, I must disclose a secret which my Betty told me; namely, that by means of Miss Lappel, the milliner, a secret correspondence had been entered into between the aspiring lover and Mrs. Patty. Every one who has clandestinely addressed a rich heiress knows that it is of great consequence to secure the waiting-maid; and I would not be so respectful to Mr. Alsop's learning,

learning, as to hint that he was deficient in such necessary knowledge. Mrs. Patty's zeal to have her lady married was too warm to be very nice about the intended husband; and no sooner did Miss Lappel tell her how deeply Mr. Alsop was *smitten*, and how very rich he was, than Patty thought it might do very well. They agreed indeed that he was *no wit*, and rather slow in conversation; but then he was good-natured, and Patty observed with a wink, that the *sharpest* men did not make the best husbands. In fine; by a prudent disposal of a few yards of Valenciennes edging, Mr. Alsop secured an able assistant, and Patty entertained her lady with encomiums upon that gentleman's great merit, as often as she dared to enter upon the subject. The trusty Abigail too, whenever she wanted a little article at Miss Lappel's, took care to tell the happy lover, that her lady seemed more and more pleased when she told her about him, and that she was sure it would *do* in time.

Relying

Relying upon this intelligence, and feeling a degree of suspicion whether his old friend Target would play fair, for which doubt, to say truth, he had some reason, Mr. Alsop determined to trust all to his own person and eloquence; therefore, one fine hot morning in July, he set out, like another Paris, to conquer or die. Not, indeed, attired like the young Trojan, when he challenged the gruff, ill-behaved King of Sparta to the lists of war; but in clean silk stockings; and a new pink padusuay waistcoat; his hair loaded with powder; and the lower part of his face so enveloped in an enormous beaudash, as to threaten suffocation. He wore a large bouquet of myrtles and geraniums, whether with an emblematick design, I will not say, and tossing a light rat-tan in his right hand, tripped nimbly over the meadow. I do not compare him to any ancient god, or modern knight of chivalry, not recollecting any similitude just in point. As he walked along he meditated, and determined to

to tell Miss Marianne, that he thought her the prettiest creature in the world; and that if she did not pity him, death must be the inevitable consequence: when, lo! as he turned round a corner to enter the court gate, she burst upon his view—not sitting alone in a shady bower—not gracefully reclined upon the turf, with a book in her hand, the emblem of elegant science; not awakening the echoes with her melodious voice; but pale, agitated, disordered in her look and appearance. She had just alighted from a carriage which stood at the gate, and by the assistance of two gentlemen, who seemed absorbed in their attention to their fair charge, slowly entered the house. Mr. Alsop's alarm banished from his mind his intended heroicks, and he hastily inquired of a servant the cause of this incident.—He was informed that Miss Marianne had ridden out that morning, and narrowly escaped a dreadful accident. Her horse had taken fright at a carriage which she met
upon

upon the road, and run away with her. She had sufficient presence of mind to keep her seat, till a young gentleman who followed the carriage, with equal agility and dexterity stopped the terrified animal, and extricated her from her perilous situation. The alarm however had overpowered her spirits, and she repeatedly fainted. Her preserver placed her in the chaise with his father, and both of them humanely accompanied her home. Mr. Alsop, judging his suit could not commence that morning, left his compliments, and after a great deal of sorrow for the accident, and joy that she was not hurt, promised to call again the next day.

Miss Dudley met her sister with tender anxiety, and assisted her to her chamber. As soon as she was assured that she had received no real injury, she left her to calm her agitated spirits, and returned to thank the gentlemen, for having preserved a
life

life so truly valuable. The elder of the two, who seemed near sixty, had a keen, sensible aspect; the other did not appear to exceed twenty, and was remarkably handsome.

When Louisa had satisfied their concern, by informing them, that her sister was already much calmer, the elder of the gentlemen declared, that if the lady did not suffer from her alarm, he should almost be so selfish as to rejoice in a circumstance which had accelerated his introduction to a family, of whom he had conceived the highest opinion. He then said his name was Clermont, that he had lately arrived at a seat he had in the vicinity, and should be happy to be considered, by the Dudleys, in the light of a neighbour and a friend.

Louisa, who had heard Captain Target mention a Lord Clermont, with whom he was upon a most familiar footing, rightly concluded her present visitor to be that nobleman. She replied, that she felt
assured



assured her father (who was then from home) would be happy to cultivate an acquaintance so much to their honour. Mr. Clermont then requested permission to call and inquire after the lady's health next morning, which she readily granted, and the gentlemen withdrew, highly pleased with the exquisite beauty of Marianne, and the graceful politeness of her sister.

Miss Dudley now inquired of Marianne the circumstances of her late alarm, and was happy to see her recovered from every ill effect of it. She then told her what had passed in the drawing-room, the rank of the family, their wish to commence an acquaintance, the striking countenance of Lord Clermont, and the expressive beauty of his son. This latter circumstance Marianne denied, for possibly her fright prevented her from observing him; she also seemed to think there would be an impropriety in receiving a visit from him during her father's absence. Louisa laughed at her sister's pru-

dery, till Marianne was rather displeased, and pettishly answered, that as she was determined upon a single life, her error was merely characteristick and of no consequence. She appeared, however, next morning dressed in an uncommonly elegant deshabille, and her natural charms were improved by the advantage of well-adapted, but apparently, unstudied ornament. I would not have my readers from thence conclude, that she was not really displeased at Miss Dudley's indiscreet permission; or that her resolution in favour of "blessed singleness" faltered; no, young lady wishes to be seen a "mere figure," and a person may be very angry at their heart, and yet adorn their face with an enchanting smile.

Mr. Clermont was accompanied by his sister, a girl about fourteen, whom he presented to the ladies; as one zealously desirous to obtain their favourable opinion. He interrupted Marianne's thanks for the assistance he so fortunately gave her, by expressing

sing the transport he felt at being able to render it. Miss Dudley directed her attention to Miss Clermont, who being too young and too timid to join much in conversation, it was principally supported by her brother and Marianne. Never was such a wonderful coincidence of opinion! Both were passionate admirers of the country; both loved moonlight walks, and the noise of distant waterfalls; both were enchanted by the sound of the sweet-toned harp, and the almost equally soft cadence of the pastoral and elegiack muse; in short, whatever was passionate, elegant, and sentimental in art; or beautiful, pensive, and enchanting in nature.

When minds are in such happy unison, time flies unperceived. I cannot guess how long the morning call might have been protracted, had not the appearance of Mr. Alsop excited a different train of ideas. His dress and manner were equally calculated to caricature the part he meant to perform; and the hopes Mrs. Patty inspired had banished his natural timidity, without substituting

any thing more valuable. His whole behaviour put the politeness of the party to a severe test. Marianne bit her lips to avoid laughing at his solemn inquiries respecting the consequences of her fright, and his assurances of the pain he felt at hearing of it. Mr. Clermont could only answer with a bow, when he assumed the office of Cicero, by offering to conduct him to all the *pretty places* in the garden. Miss Dudley's embarrassment was increased, by observing that Miss Clermont had by no means obtained a command over her risible muscles; but sat pinching her fingers to prevent a loud laugh. The Danbury Adonis determined when he left home, to *fit out* any company that might be at Stannadine; for to say truth he was tired of hot morning walks, and determined to carry off the prize before the return of her father. The Clermonts, therefore, were compelled to order their carriage, and while the ladies accompanied them to the door, Miss Clermont expressed a hope that though her mother was not then in the country, Miss
Dudleys

Dudleys would have the goodness to excuse her absence, and favour them with their company at the park. Louisa, fearful of offending her sister's prudence, postponed the invitation till Mr. Dudley's return.

Mr. Allop, who considered this visit as no good omen for him, felt his disagreeable prognosticks confirmed, by Louisa's returning to him with a slight apology for her sister's absence. He did not doubt that she was playing the part of a Duenna, and despairing to elude such a watchful Argus, at one time resolved boldly to demand a conference with his charmer. But recollecting that it would be as prudent to try to propitiate her keeper, he frankly owned that he was very deeply in love, mentioned his income, and earnestly implored her good opinion. He certainly knew which of the ladies he meant to address, but being much agitated, and not very clear in his expressions, he unhappily conveyed to her the arrogant hope that she was the object of his pursuit; she

therefore thanked him for the honour he had done her, but intreated him 'to desist from an address which never could succeed. Mr. Alfop desired she would consult her sister, refusing to take a positive denial till Marianne was informed of his design. Miss Dudley thought this reference extraordinary, and told him her sister's sentiments could make no change in her determination. Mr. Alfop answered, she was then very barbarous, and said something about freedom, which Louisa mistaking, replied, she hoped freedom of opinion would be permitted to herself. At length the lover grew warm, and told her he saw her designs, and was determined to overthrow them, and to carry his point, in spite of all the opposition she could make. Thus they separated, the gentleman in furious indignation, and the lady wondering what steps her resolute swain would take, to compel her to attend him to the altar.

C H A P. XVII.

A modern lover makes his exit, but not in a style of high heroism.

NO sooner was Mr. Alsop gone, than Miss Dudley, impelled (I suppose) by the spirit of envy, flew to her sister, to inform her of the ardent passion she had inspired, in a heart which Marianne certainly accounted her own. I cannot say that the dispute between the ladies was carried on with as much acrimony as mirth; but certainly each heroically complimented the other with offers to resign the contested conquest. Poor Mr. Alsop's affair being soon dispatched, the conversation turned upon the Clermonts. Marianne commended the simplicity, propriety, and modest sweetness of the sister; and Louisa asked her, if she was not *now* a convert to the brother's uncommon beauty? Marianne was resolutely determined against love: but, since there was such a similarity of soul, intended to cultivate a platonick friend-

friendship with Mr. Clermont. I think in that heterogeneous composition beauty cannot be an essential quality. I rather suppose, since mind is the only object, it would subsist in its fullest perfection between old Blue Beard and Lady Medusa. Marianne Dudley probably thought the same. She was shocked to hear her sister talk of Mr. Clermont as merely an handsome man; while she took no notice of that superior virtue, that inherent excellence, that sublime amiability which she already discovered was congenial to his soul. Indeed Louisa was apt to commend only what was apparent, and generally reserved her praise of those *latent* qualities, till their existence was confirmed by experience.

Marianne passed the remainder of the day in perusing pastorals, and playing upon her harp. At night, after having taken leave of her sister, Patty, with many apologies, many assurances that she would not do such a thing again for the world, many protestations

tions that she met him quite by accident, and much pity bestowed upon the poor gentleman, put into her hand a billet-doux from Mr. Alsop. Marianne at first declined reading it, till her sister was present; but being assured by Patty that Miss Dudley was not to know of it, ventured to break the seal. A love-letter is generally thought rather a difficult performance, and perhaps I shall be of service to the rising generation of sighing swains if I communicate a warranted original:

‘ MADAM,

‘ As I have been certified by authentick
‘ testimony, that the party to whom I stated
‘ my case is biaſſed in judgment, and likely
‘ to hold back evidence, I have undertaken
‘ to plead my own cause; and though I will
‘ not be so bold as to ask a favourable ver-
‘ dict, depend upon receiving mercy. First,
‘ I premise, Madam, never was man more
‘ in love. Secondly, I could bring many
‘ witnesses to speak to my character. Third-

' ly, I possess the fee-simple of an estate in
 ' the county of Westmoreland, of seven
 ' hundred pounds per annum, devised by my
 ' late father. Fourthly, I enjoy five thou-
 ' sand in the long annuities, by virtue of
 ' the will of my aunt Margaret Alsop, spin-
 ' ster. Now, Madam, judge if I should be
 ' condemned unheard. Let the cause come
 ' speedily to issue, and believe me,

' Dearest of creatures,

' Yours till death,

' THOMAS ALSOP.

' N. B. Be pleased to avoid naming this
 subject to Miss Dudley.'

Though the humane Patty endeavoured
 to excite her lady's compassion for the mise-
 rable writer, she was too much diverted by
 the epistle to attend for some time to senti-
 ments of pity. At length she inquired how
 she could assist him, since strictly prohibited
 from saying any thing about him to her sis-
 ter, who was the person whose favour he
 was solicitous to obtain. This question
 brought

brought on an eclairsissement; Patty vowing, that he protested he was in love with her lady, and Marianne as positively affirming that he had made proposals to Louisa that very day. There is no arguing against facts. Patty was forced to give him up as a base perjured lover, and deeply moralized upon the general infidelity of men, to exculpate herself from the charge of credulity, in having been imposed upon by Mr. Alfop's pretended passion. She received a positive injunction never to mention his name to her mistress again, and to return his letter, with an intimation that his impertinence would receive no other answer. Patty obeyed, and penned a furious epistle; in which she bitterly reproached him with having exposed her to her lady's resentment, and ruined his own hopes by his perfidious behaviour.

Nothing could exceed the astonishment of Mr. Alfop at this charge. Indeed the accusation of perfidy was extremely unjust, as

ever since the first encouraging ray beamed upon his love, he had been invariably fixed to the object of his pursuit; I mean the lovely Marianne's fortune. It was the object of his daily thoughts and nightly dreams; he had proceeded so far as to plan the future method of expenditure. How then could he be false? Utterly ignorant of the name of the lady with whom he was charged with infidelity, he could only exclaim with Shakespear's Hero,

'That my accusers know who have condemn'd me.'

In this agony he flew to receive the soft lenitives which friendship affords; but Captain Target thought proper to apply only corrosives to the wound. In pretty plain terms he called him a blundering fool, ornamenting his discourse with those flowers of rhetorick, which, though the repetition of them would be judged *disgraceful* to a female pen, are certainly esteemed by the gentlemen who use them as the very quintessence of wit, and
the

the criterion of manly sense. He at length reluctantly consented to go to Stannadine, and endeavour to discover what this heinous offence was. Indeed he was not in reality sorry at his friend's miscarriage, having only made use of him as a skilful general does of his raw, undisciplined troops, to discover the strength of the enemy previous to his arranging the grand attack; firmly persuaded that by a few of those skilful manœuvres allowable in love as well as war, he could at any time divert the laurel from Alsop's brows to his own.

But if that hope had ever been well founded, "the golden glorious opportunity" was lost. Miss Marianne, dazzled by the attractive beams of friendship, not only refused to look at love, but considered it as a false fire, and the source of all female wretchedness.

Captain Target had the penetration to perceive this, and after joining in a hearty laugh at his friend's mistake, prudently avoided

ed discovering his own attachment; which would indeed have banished him from the enjoyment of Mr. Dudley's hospitality, for which he entertained a most *profound* regard.

CHAP. XVIII.

Variety, an antidote to satiety.

LOUISA informed her father of the events which had happened in his absence, and soon received from him the following answer:

‘ TO MISS DUDLEY.

‘ The playful vivacity with which my dear
 ‘ girl relates Alfop's odd adventure, would
 ‘ lighten my bosom of many of its cares,
 ‘ were I not assured that your filial delicacy
 ‘ would induce you to conceal the affliction
 ‘ that rived your heart, and pretend to
 ‘ cheerfulness in the moment of agony; lest
 ‘ you should reproach a conscience deeply
 ‘ wounded.

‘ wounded. I will not however increase my
 ‘ real sorrows by imaginary ones, but will
 ‘ suppose that I have not made my Louisa
 ‘ wretched.

‘ I rejoice from my very soul at Mari-
 ‘ anne’s escape : I will certainly wait upon
 ‘ Lord Clermont, to express my gratitude
 ‘ to him and his son, immediately upon my
 ‘ return. The intimacy he requests will, I
 ‘ fear, be incompatible with the plans we
 ‘ must too probably adopt. You tell me,
 ‘ unless a sister’s partiality deceives you, Mr.
 ‘ Clermont looks on Marianne with more
 ‘ than admiration. I scarce wish her to
 ‘ make a conquest of so *young* a lover.

‘ You express a desire to hear of my own
 ‘ affairs. The only pleasant circumstances
 ‘ which have happened to me, have been
 ‘ owing to an accidental meeting with Mr.
 ‘ Pelham. As my connexions with Tonne-
 ‘ reau *must* be divulged, I did not conceal
 ‘ from him the unpleasant motive of my
 ‘ journey. I am unable, Louisa, to express
 ‘ the

‘ the manner in which this most excellent
‘ young man has endeavoured to console
‘ me. He positively insisted that I should
‘ remove from the lodgings I had taken, and
‘ accept of an apartment in his house. He
‘ behaves to me with yet superior esteem and
‘ respect, than when he was at Stannadine.
‘ soliciting your sister’s hand. Oh, that she
‘ had viewed him with approbation! we then
‘ should have enjoyed the comforts of pro-
‘ tection, without feeling the miseries of de-
‘ pendance. But let us not repine: the
‘ events of life are guided by a wise director,
‘ who often extracts real good out of seem-
‘ ing evil.

‘ Mr. Pelham has frequently mentioned
‘ you. He tells me Sir William Milton’s
‘ attachment to you is more violent than
‘ ever, and that he is as wretched as pride,
‘ disappointment, and self-reproach can make
‘ him. I find he has not been quite so cri-
‘ minal as we conceived. The Mortons, my
‘ love, are artful women: the daughter, who
‘ is

' is uncommonly beautiful, was educated for
 ' the infamous purpose of attracting the no-
 ' tice of some man of fortune. She lost her
 ' character before she went to India, where,
 ' Mr. Pelham says, she laid such snares, as
 ' his cousin's prudence was unable to resist.
 ' You will be astonished, but during the
 ' three years she lived with him, she made
 ' his lofty spirit submit to what she pleased
 ' to propose. Mr. Pelham owns that she
 ' was at length left without any provision,
 ' but this was not wholly her paramour's
 ' fault, as at their quarrelling she stubbornly
 ' refused to accept of any. Nothing was
 ' done for the children: this Mr. Pelham
 ' severely reprobates; and I find has at
 ' length persuaded Sir William to settle one
 ' hundred a-year upon each of them.

' Lady Milton's health is rapidly declining.
 ' From the high character she had heard of
 ' you, she persuaded herself you would soften
 ' those asperities in her son's manner, which
 ' even a partial mother could not avoid per-
 ' ceiving.

'ceiving. Mr. Pelham is so persuaded that
 'you are necessary to Sir William's happi-
 'ness, that he wished me to say whether I
 'thought it possible you could forgive the
 'past, if his future conduct should appear
 'to deserve your esteem. I would not en-
 'courage such a distant expectation, or bind
 'my Louisa to an improbable contingency.

'It is a pleasure to see my amiable host in
 'his own family : the regularity of his house-
 'hold, the cheerful respect of his servants.
 'He mingles in the world, but is not fasci-
 'nated by its pleasures. His father's sister
 'lives with him; she does not seem remark-
 'able either for her virtues or abilities; and
 'I can perceive her temper is somewhat in-
 'jured by the infirmities of age: yet Mr.
 'Pelham contrives to make every one as
 'attentive to her as himself, and thus gives
 'her an importance she would not otherwise
 'possess. His behaviour proceeds from
 'gratitude; for she nursed him when an in-
 'fant in a very dangerous illness; and it
 'is

' is principally owing to her care that his life
 ' was prolonged. I live, my dear, in times
 ' when I hear much about publick virtue.
 ' Those actions of a man's life which are ex-
 ' hibited upon the theatre of the world are
 ' always of doubtful origin. Ambition and
 ' avarice may in reality claim what appears
 ' to proceed from patriotisim and benevo-
 ' lence; but the retired virtues of domestick
 ' life are sure indications of that excellence
 ' of heart, and rectitude of intention, which
 ' the author of all good promises to reward.

' Mr. Pelham never names your sifter: in
 ' this he is equally generous and delicate.
 ' He knows how my heart seconded his
 ' wishes, and kindly avoids a subject which
 ' could only give me pain. His active friend-
 ' ship has discovered a gleam of hope, which
 ' perhaps like many former ones will only
 ' end in deeper disappointment. An uncle
 ' of Mr. Tonnereau's, who died in Holland,
 ' bequeathed him an immense estate. This
 ' was supposed to be placed beyond the
 ' reach

‘ reach of our English laws ; but an eminent
 ‘ counsellor, whose opinion, unknown to
 ‘ me, Mr. Pelham has obtained, states, that
 ‘ he conceives it may be amenable to his
 ‘ debts ; and I am advised, as being the prin-
 ‘ cipal creditor, to attempt the recovery of
 ‘ it. My generous friend offers me every
 ‘ assistance, and I shall stay some time longer
 ‘ in London to hear further particulars.

‘ I will write to Marianne by this post.
 ‘ She is a truly amiable child, and my af-
 ‘ fections are equally divided between my
 ‘ daughters ; but the peculiar circumstances
 ‘ of my present situation forbid me to dis-
 ‘ close to her my *whole* heart. My Louisa
 ‘ has long had a prescriptive right to the
 ‘ confidence of her

‘ Affectionate father,

‘ RICHARD DUDLEY.

Such an epistle could not but give delight
 to a heart in which the flame of filial piety
 glowed with purest lustre : but perhaps it
 was

was not wholly ascribable to that amiable quality, that Louisa, after pressing the letter to her lips, deposited it in her bosom, repeating at the same time her father's words, "that the author of all good would certainly reward the virtues of Mr. Pelham."

As Mr. Dudley's letter to Marianne is not essential to my design, I shall omit it. That young lady's apprehensions respecting her father's embarrassments had been considerably relieved, by the evasive answers of her sister; whose uniform cheerfulness, joined to the observation that the family arrangement was conducted in its usual liberal way, at length entirely removed the suspicion. Mrs. Patty too, who to serve a particular purpose had been the cause of exciting her alarm, perceiving that it did not take the right effect, took care to make Thomas unsay every hint, to the disadvantage of his master's fortune.

Marianne was now therefore *tolerably* easy; she never permitted herself to be more. Always dissatisfied with the present, regretting

regretting the past, and anticipating the future, she became peculiarly ingenious in the art of self-tormenting. Her friendship for Mr. Clermont (though only friendship) was of such an apprehensive kind, that it could not promote the tranquillity of the bosom in which it was cherished. It was so peculiarly susceptible, that, notwithstanding his frequent visits and marked attentions, it continually suggested the idea that she was not so amiable in his eye, as he was in her's. These reflections did not excite any alarm respecting the state of her heart; was it not fortified by resolutions against love? Besides, she recollected that in the beginning of their attachment she felt the same doubts respecting the sincerity of her dear Eliza Milton.

The bar which had subsisted to prevent her confidential correspondence with that lady, during the period of Mr. Pelham's visits, being removed, Miss Milton had written her a most affectionate epistle; in which, though she lamented that the ill success of her
brother

brother and cousin had prevented the family connection so much desired from taking place, she observed a bond still subsisted, more sacred, more indissoluble than any other. She flourished a little upon the word friendship, and then desired her dearest Marianne to remember its hallowed claims. This produced a very diffuse reply, in which such reasons were given for Mr. Pelham's dismissal, as entirely satisfied the fair confident, who declared that her friend had acted with her usual greatness of soul, in rejecting a man whom (however unexceptionable) she could not love.

Marianne had now an additional employment, besides playing upon her harp, reading pastoral poetry, walking in the woods by moonlight, and listening to distant waterfalls. She kept a journal of the events of the day, and every morning dispatched two sheets of paper, closely written, to her beloved Eliza. If any sceptical critick should censure this as a violation of probability,

lity, observing that a lady leading a retired country life could not find matter for such voluminous details, I shall pity his ignorance, and refer him to the production of many of my contemporaries; where he may be convinced, that sentiment is to the full as ductile as gold, and when beaten thin will cover as incalculable an extent of surface.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.





